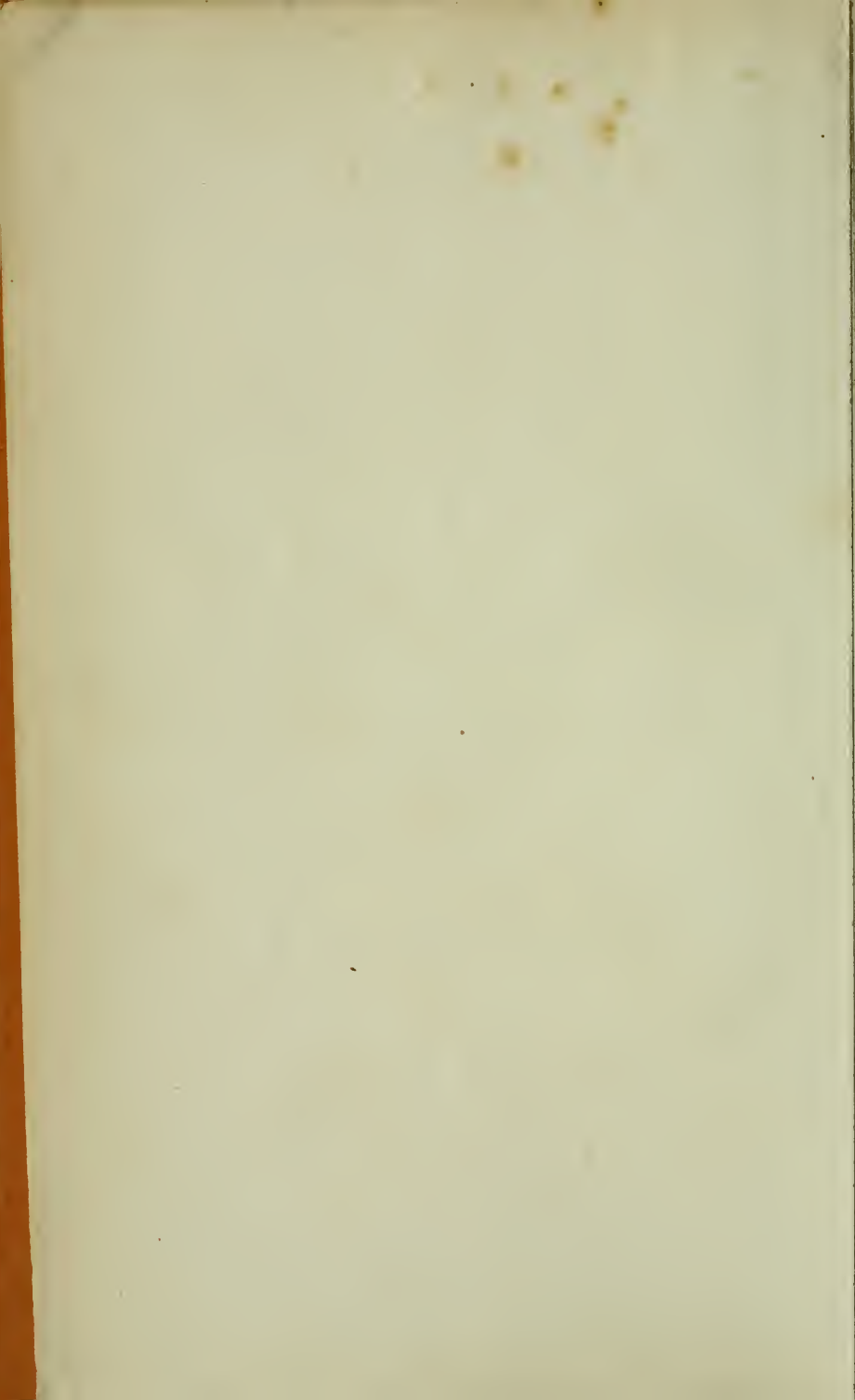




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Two lectures on the Study of History. by G. L. Smith	1
Three lectures on Ecclesiastical History. by A. P. Stanley	2
Chatterton. An Essay by S. R. Maitland D.D.	3
The Church & the Millions. 3 rd ed. by Rev. E. Moore	4
An enquiry into the death of King Robt. by Pettigrew	5
Workhouses & Women's Work	6
Moral Theology of the Church of Rome	7
Two Letters on the Ecclesiastical Commission. - E. J. Smith	8
Debate on the Repeal of the Hop Duties	9
Peachurst. A paper by J. H. Parker	10



THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

Two Lectures

DELIVERED BY

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PREFACE.

THE theory of History adopted in these lectures is in accordance with the doctrine of Progress; a doctrine which is so far from being new that it must have been acted on by all who took thought for posterity.

Christianity cannot be said to be opposed to Progress, unless it can be shewn that Christianity forbids or discourages virtue, science, or industry, these being the three elements of which human progress consists.

The great source of Progress is love of our kind; as the great obstacle to Progress is self-love, which perverts our moral activity, turns our intellect to the indulgence of ambition and vanity instead of the pursuit of truth, and destroys, through indolence and vice, the industry which adds to the common store. Love of our kind as opposed to self-love is the cardinal and distinguishing doctrine of Christianity. On this vital point the newest and most daring philosophy has only been able to repeat the Christian precept with a verbal change, or a change which, if more than verbal, is wrong. If "live for others" means more than "love one another," it means total annihilation of self, which is an impracticable dream.

It might have been imagined that the unworldliness which Christianity imposes would prevent men from

making themselves useful to the world. But such is in fact not the case. The greatest statesmen and soldiers have been most fervent Christians. Even enthusiasts, who imagined the world was coming to an end, have displayed great practical energy and wisdom, as well as entire devotion to their cause. This is a paradox which it would be a platitude to explain.

The corporate interests of certain State Churches have indeed been fearfully opposed to the progress of mankind; but they have been equally opposed to the progress of Christianity. State Churches, whatever relation they may bear to Christianity, are not of its essence, any more than sacerdotalism, sacramentalism, dogmatism, or other additions which were unknown to the first disciples of Christ. If Christianity is to be arraigned as an enemy to reason and improvement, we must put ourselves in the position of listeners to the Sermon on the Mount, and regard the religion in its original essence as a new principle of action and a new source of spiritual life.

It has been said that Christianity must be retrograde, because instead of looking forward it looks back to Christ. It is not easy to see why it is more retrograde to look back to the source of a higher spiritual life in Christ than it is to look back to the source of all life in Mr. Darwin's monad.

If indeed there is any passage in the Gospels putting an artificial limit to the improvement of human character, or enumerating certain observances as the

sum of attainable perfection, the case is altered; but the passage must be produced. If it is said that the special type of character exhibited by the Founder of Christianity is the artificial limit, I answer that I see nothing in that type which is special, or which is not of the essence of all goodness and beauty of character; that the imitation of it has, as a matter of fact, issued in endless improvement and boundless variety; and that it is connected with no special observances whatever. But the character of the Founder of Christianity, as well as His doctrine, must be viewed as it is, and not as Eastern Asceticism, Romanism, or any other perversion of Christianity represents it.

Again, Christianity is not opposed to a philosophic view of history, unless it denies the unity of the human race, or teaches that any nation was disregarded by God, and left out of the scheme of Providence. Christianity teaches the reverse of this, whatever may be taught, directly or indirectly, by any Christian sect. "God . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us." Could the unity of the human race, the providential character of all history, or the progress of men towards the knowledge of all that is divine, be enunciated in clearer language than this?

Coleridge, the greatest of English divines, as well

as one of the greatest of English philosophers, propounded most distinctly, and in the same pages with the most fervent Christianity, views of history which are now imagined to be new and startling discoveries, the exclusive property of an antichristian school. In his *Friend* (vol. iii. Essay 10,) he treats all history as an education of the mind of the race, and shews the part which the great nations of antiquity played in the process. “In the education of the mind of the race,” he says, “as in that of the individual, each different age and purpose requires different objects and different means; though all dictated by the same principle, tending towards the same end, and forming consecutive parts of the same method.” After speaking of the Greeks, he adds, “That I include them as educated under a distinct providential, though not miraculous, dispensation, will surprise no one who reflects that in whatever has a permanent operation on all the destinies and intellectual condition of mankind at large—that in all which has been manifestly employed as a co-agent in the mightiest revolution of the moral world, the propagation of the Gospel; and in the intellectual progress of mankind, in the restoration of philosophy, science, and the ingenuous arts—it were irreligious not to acknowledge the hand of Divine Providence ^a.”

^a This Essay in “*The Friend*” may possibly have suggested the idea which has been worked out by Dr. Temple in “*Essays and Reviews*.” He has been confidently charged by antichristian writers with borrowing it from the teachers of their school; and the charge, ignorantly made, has been ignorantly believed.

These few remarks seemed necessary to guard against unfair inferences and deductions.

The first of these two lectures was delivered some time ago—in June 1859, and was then printed for private circulation; but it has been revised for publication.

LECTURE I.

THE first question which the student of history has now to ask himself is, Whether history is governed by necessary laws? If it is, it ought to be written and read as a science. It may be an imperfect science as yet, owing to the complexity of the phenomena, the incompleteness of the observations, the want of a rational method; but, in its nature, it is a science, and is capable of being brought to perfection.

History could not be studied as a whole,—there could be no philosophy of history,—till we thoroughly felt the unity of the human race. That great discovery is one which rebukes the pretensions of individual genius to be the sole source of progress, for it was made not by one man, but by mankind. Kindled by no single mind, it spread over the world like the light of morning; and the prism must be the work of a cunning hand which could discriminate in it the blended rays of duty, interest, and affection. First, perhaps, the greatness of the Roman character broke through the narrow exclusiveness of savage nationality, by bending in its hour of conquest to the intellect of conquered Greece; nobler in this than Greece herself, who, with all her philosophy, talked to the last of Greek and barbarian, and could never see the man beneath the slave. First, perhaps, on the mind of the Roman Stoic the great idea of the community of man, with its universal rights and duties, distinctly though

faintly dawned. And therefore to the Roman Stoic it was given to be the real author of Rome's greatest gift, the science of universal law. Christianity broke down far more thoroughly the barriers between nation and nation, between freeman and slave, for those who were within her pale. Between those within and those without the pale she put perhaps a deeper and wider gulf; not in the times of the apostles, but in the succeeding times of fierce conflict with heathen vice and persecution, and still more in the fanatical and crusading middle ages. The resurrection of Greece and Rome in the revival of their literature made the world one again, and united at once the Christian to the heathen, and the present to the remotest past. The heathen moralist, teaching no longer in the disguise of a school divine, but in his own person, the heathen historian awakening Christian sympathies, the heathen poet touching Christian hearts, shewed that in morality, in sympathy, in heart, though not in faith, the Christian and the heathen were one. That sense of unity, traversing all distinctions between Christian and pagan, and between the Churches of divided Christendom, has grown with the growth of philosophy, science, jurisprudence, literature, art, the common and indivisible heritage of man. A more enlightened and humane diplomacy and the gradual ascendancy of international law have strengthened the sense of common interests and universal justice from which they sprang; and France, the eldest daughter of the Church, has crusaded to save the Crescent from the aggression of the Cross. Commerce, too, breaking link by link its mediæval fetters, has helped to knit nations together in sympathy as well as by interest, and to remove the barriers of the

dividing mountains and the estranging sea. There was needed, besides, a great and varied range of recorded history to awaken thoroughly the historic sense, to furnish abundant matter for historical reflection, and to arouse a lively curiosity as to the relation between the present and the past. There was needed a habit of methodical investigation, with a view to real results, of which physical science is the great school. There was needed a knowledge, which could only come from the same source, of the physical conditions and accessories of man's estate. These conditions fulfilled, the philosophy of history was born; and its birth opens a new realm of thought, full, we can scarcely doubt, of great results for man. Vico indeed was the precursor of this philosophy. In his mind first arose the thought, awakened by the study of Greek and Roman antiquity, that history should be read as a whole, and that this whole might have a law. But the law he imagined, that of revolving cycles of men and events, was wild and fruitless as a dream.

It was natural that physical science should claim the philosophy of history as a part of her own domain, that she should hasten to plant her flag upon this newly-discovered land of thought. Flushed with unhopedor triumphs, why should she not here also triumph beyond hope? She scorns to see her advance arrested by the imagined barrier between the physical and moral world. The phenomena of man's life and history are complicated, indeed, more complicated even than those of the tides or of the weather; but the phenomena of the tides and of the weather have yielded or are yielding to close observation, well recorded statistics, and patient reasoning; why should not the phenomena of man's actions yield too, and life

and history be filled, like all the world besides, with the calm majesty of natural law? It is a grand thought; and at this time it finds not only minds open to its grandeur, but hearts ready to welcome it. Western Christendom has long been heaving with a mighty earthquake of opinion, only less tremendous than that of the Reformation because there was no edifice so vast and solid as mediæval Catholicism to be laid low by the shock. Some their fear of this earthquake has driven to take refuge in ancient fanes, and by altars whose fires are cold. Others are filled with a Lucretian longing to repose under the tranquil reign of physical necessity, to become a part of the material world, and to cast their perplexities on the popes and hierarchs of science and her laws. Only let them be sure that what is august and tranquillizing in law really belongs to science, and that it is not borrowed by her from another source. Let them be sure that in putting off the dignity, they also put off the burden of humanity. If man is no higher in his destinies than the beast or the blade of grass, it may be better to be a beast or a blade of grass than a man.

History is made up of human actions, whether those actions are political, social, religious, military, or of any other kind. The founding and maintaining of institutions, the passing and keeping of laws, the erecting and preserving of churches and forms of worship, the instituting and observing of social customs, may be all resolved into the element of action. So may all intellectual history, whether of speculation, observation, or composition, with their products and effects; the bending of the mind to thought being in every respect as much an action as the moving of the hand. What we call national actions, are the

actions of a multitude of men acting severally though concurrently, and with all the incidents of several action; or they are the actions of those men who are in power. Whatever there is in action, therefore, will be everywhere present in history; and the founders of the new physical science of history have to lay the foundations of their science in what seems the quicksand of free-will.

This difficulty they have to meet either by shewing that free-will is an illusion, or by shewing that its presence throughout history is compatible, in spite of all appearances, with the existence of an exact historical science.

They take both lines. Some say 'Free-will is an illusion, or, at least, we cannot be sure that it is real. Our only knowledge of it is derived from consciousness, and it is by no means certain that consciousness is a faculty. It is very likely only a state or condition of the mind. Besides, the mind cannot observe itself: it is not in nature that the same thing should be at once observer and observed.'

It signifies little under what technical head we class consciousness. The question is, from what source do those who repudiate its indications derive the knowledge of their own existence? From what other source do they derive the knowledge that their words, the very words they use in this denial, correspond to their thoughts, and will convey their thoughts to others? The mind may not be able to place itself on the table before it, or look at itself through a microscope, and there may be nothing else in nature like its power of self-observation; possibly the term self-observation, being figurative, may not adequately represent the fact, and may even, if pressed, involve some confusion

of ideas. But he is scarcely a philosopher who fancies that the peculiarity of a mental fact, or our want of an adequate name for it, is a good reason for setting the fact aside. The same writers constantly speak of the phenomena of mind ; so that it appears there must be some phenomena of mind which they have been able to observe. In whose mind did they see these phenomena ? Did they see them in the minds of others, or, by self-observation, in their own ?

But others say, ‘ We admit the reality of free-will ; but the opposite to free-will is necessity, and to form the foundation of our science, we do not want necessity, but only causation and the certainty which causation carries with it : necessity is a mysterious and embarrassing word, let us put it out of the question.’ But then, if necessity does not mean the certain connexion between cause and effect, what is it to mean ? Is the word to be sent adrift on the dictionary without a meaning ? The rooted contradiction in our minds between the notion of freedom of action, and that of being bound by the chain of certain causation, is not to be removed merely by denying us the use of the term by which the contradiction is expressed.

But, again, they say ‘ You may as well get over this apparent contradiction in life and history between free-will and certain science, for you must get over the apparent contradiction in life and history between free-will and the certain omniscience of the Creator, which comprehends human actions, and which you acknowledge as part of your religious faith.’ No doubt this, though an *argumentum ad hominem*, is perfectly relevant, because the objection it meets is one in the minds of those to whom it is addressed ; and I think it has been justly observed, that it can-

not be answered by distinguishing between foreknowledge and afterknowledge, because its force lies in the certainty which is common to all knowledge, not in the relation of time between the knowledge and the thing known. The real answer seems to be this, that the words omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, though positive in form, are negative in meaning. They mean only that we know not the bounds of the knowledge, power, or presence of God. What we do know, if we know anything, is that His presence is not such as to annihilate or absorb our separate being, nor His knowledge and power such as to overrule or render nugatory our free-will.

Nor will it avail the constructors of a science of Man to cite the moral certainty with which we predict the conduct of men or nations whose characters are settled. This settled character was formed by action, and the action by which it was formed was free; so that the uncertain element which baffles science is not got rid of, but only thrown back over a history or a life.

Then they analyse action, and say it follows its motive, and may be predicted from the motive, just as any other consequent in nature follows and may be predicted from its antecedent. It follows *a* motive, but how are we to tell *which* motive it will follow. Action is a choice between motives; even in our most habitual acts it is a choice between acting and rest. The only ground we have for calling one motive the strongest is that it has prevailed before; but the motive which has prevailed before, and prevailed often and long, is set aside in every great change of conduct, individual or national, by an effort of the will, for which, to preserve the chain of causation and

the science founded on that chain, some other antecedent must be found.

Action, we said, was a choice between motives. It is important in this inquiry to observe that it is a choice between them, not a compound or a resultant of them all; so that a knowledge of all the motives present at any time to the mind of a man or nation would not enable us to predict the action as we predict the result of a combination of chemical elements or mechanical forces. The motive which is not acted on goes for nothing; and as that motive may be and often is the one which—according to the only test we have, that of the man's previous actions—is the strongest, we see on what sort of foundation a science of action and history must build.

When the action is done, indeed, the connexion between it and its motive becomes necessary and certain; and we may argue backwards from action to motive with all the accuracy of science. Finding at Rome a law to encourage tyrannicide, we are certain that there had been tyrants at Rome, though there is nothing approaching to historical evidence of the tyranny of Tarquin.

Those who would found history or ethics on a necessarian, or, if they will, a causal theory of action, have three things to account for,—our feeling at the moment of action that we are free to do or not to do,—our approving or blaming ourselves afterwards for having done the act or left it undone, which implies that we were free,—and the approbation or blame of each other, which implies the same thing. I do not see that they even touch any of these problems but the first. They do not tell us whether conscience is an illusion or not; nor, if it is not an

illusion, do they attempt to resolve for us the curious question, what this strange pricking in the heart of a mere necessary agent means. They do not explain to us why we should praise or blame, reward or punish each other's good or bad actions, any more than the good or bad effects of anything in the material world; why the virtues and vices of man are to be treated on a totally different footing from the virtues of food or the vices of poison. Praise and blame they do,—praise as heartily and blame at least as sharply as the rest of the world; but they do not tell us why. We must not be deceived by the forms of scientific reasoning, when those who use them do not face the facts.

Great stress is laid by the Necessarians on what are called moral statistics. It seems that, feel as free as we may, our will is bound by a law compelling the same number of men to commit the same number of crimes within a certain cycle. The cycle, curiously enough, coincides with the period of a year which is naturally selected by the Registrar-General for his reports. But, first, the statistics tendered are not moral, but legal. They tell us only the outward act, not its inward moral character. They set down alike under Murder the act of a Rush or a Palmer, and the act of an Othello. Secondly, we are to draw some momentous inference from the uniformity of the returns. How far are they uniform? M. Quetelet gives the number of convictions in France for the years 1826, '7, '8, '9, severally as 4348, 4236, 4551, 4475. The similarity is easily accounted for by that general uniformity of human nature which we all admit. How is the difference, amounting to more than 300 between one year and the next, to be accounted for except by free-will? But, thirdly, it will be found that these

statistics are unconsciously, but effectually, garbled. To prove the law of the uniformity of crime, periods are selected when crime was uniform. Instead of four years of the Restoration, in which we know very well there was no great outburst of wickedness, give us a table including the civil war between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, the St. Bartholomew, the Reign of Terror, or the days of June 1848. It will be said, perhaps, that this was under different circumstances; but it is a very free use of the term 'circumstance' to include in it all the evil and foolish actions of men which lead to, or are committed in, a sanguinary revolution. Social and criminal statistics are most valuable; the commencement of their accurate registration will probably be a great epoch in the history of legislation and government; but the reason why they are so valuable is that they are not fixed by necessity, as the Necessarians allege or insinuate, but variable, and may be varied for the better by the wisdom of governments,—governments which Necessarians are always exhorting to reform themselves, instead of shewing how their goodness or badness necessarily arises from the climate or the food. If the statistics were fixed by necessity, to collect them would be a mere indulgence of curiosity, like measuring all the human race when we could not add a cubit to their stature.

It is important when people talk of calculating the probabilities and chances of human action on these statistics, to guard against a loose use (which I think I have seen somewhere noted) of the words probability and chance. Probability relates to human actions, which cannot be calculated unless you can find a certain antecedent for the will. Chance is mere igno-

rance of physical causes ; ignorance in what order the cards will turn up, because we are ignorant in what order they are turned down : and it is difficult to see by what manipulation, out of mere ignorance, knowledge can be educed. It is worth remarking also that an average is not a law : not only so, but the taking an average rather implies that no law is known.

But, it may be said, all must give way to a law gathered by fair and complete induction from the facts of history. It is perhaps not so clear why knowledge drawn from within ourselves should give way to knowledge drawn from without. But be that as it may, we may pronounce at once that a complete induction from the facts of history is impossible. History cannot furnish its own inductive law. An induction, to be sound, must take in, actually or virtually, all the facts. But history is unlike all other studies in this, that she never can have, actually or virtually, all the facts before her. What is past she knows in part ; what is to come she knows not, and can never know. The scroll from which she reads is but half unrolled : and what the other half contains, what even the next line contains, no one has yet been able to foretell. Prediction, the crown of all science, the new science of Man and History has not ventured to put on. That prerogative, which is the test of her legitimacy, she has not yet ventured to exert.

Science indeed, far from indicating that the materials for the great induction are complete, would, if anything, rather lead us to believe that the human race and its history are young. The vast length of geologic compared with the shortness of historic time, whispers that the drama for which the stage was so long preparing must have many acts still to come.

This ignorance of what is to come destroys, it would seem, among other inductive theories of history, the famous one of Comte, who makes the course of history to be determined by the progress of science through its three stages, "Theological," "Metaphysical," and "Positive;"—"Positive" having, let us observe, a double meaning, *atheistical* and *sound*, so that the use of it, in effect, involves a continual begging of the question. How can M. Comte tell that the "Positive" era is the end of all? How can he tell that the three stages he has before him are anything but a mere segment of a more extensive law? But besides this, before we proceed to compare a colossal hypothesis with the facts, we must see whether it is rational in itself, and consistent with our previous knowledge. An hypothesis accounting for certain facts by reference to the sun's motion round the earth, or anything else obviously false or absurd, may be dismissed at once, without the form of a verification. The three terms of the supposed series, the Theological, Metaphysical, and Positive states, must be distinct and successive, or it will be no series at all. Now taking "Positive" in the fair sense, the sense of *sound*, Theology and Positive Science, the theological and the scientific view of the world, are neither distinct nor successive, but may very well go, and do often go, together. A man may be, and Newton was, a sound astronomer and a great discoverer of astronomical laws, and yet believe that the stars were made and are held in their courses by the hand of God. A man may be, and Butler was, a sound moral philosopher, and a great discoverer of the laws of human nature, and yet believe human nature to be in its origin and end divine. Positivists cite for our admiration a say-

ing of Lamennais, contrasting, as they suppose, the religious with the scientific view of things. "Why do bodies gravitate towards each other? Because God willed it, said the ancients. Because they attract each other, says Science." As though God could not will that bodies should attract each other. Polytheism, putting the different parts of nature under the arbitrary dominion of separate gods, conflicts with, and has been overthrown by, Science, which proves that one set of laws, the work of one God, traverses the whole. And this I venture to think is the mustard-seed of truth out of which the vast tree of M. Comte's historical theory has grown. So far from there being any conflict between Monotheism and Science, all the discoveries of science confirm the hypothesis that the world was made by one God; an hypothesis which, it should be observed, was quite independent of the progress of science, since it had been promulgated in the first chapter of Genesis before science came into existence. As to the Metaphysical era, which is the intervening term of the series between the Theological and the Positive, nothing in history corresponding to this era has been or can be produced. No age is or can be pointed out in which a nation or mankind believed the phenomena of the world or of human nature to be produced by metaphysical entities. A few philosophers indeed have talked of nature as the mother of all things; but by nature they meant not a metaphysical entity, but either the laws of matter personified, in which case they were Positivists, or the God of natural religion as opposed to the God of revelation, in which case they were Theists. So that of the three terms of the supposed series, the first runs into the third and the second vanishes altogether.

The theory is open to another objection, which is also fatal. Against all the facts, though in accordance with the bias naturally given to M. Comte's mind by his scientific pursuits, it makes the scientific faculties and tendencies predominant in man. Which view of science was it that predominated in Attila and Timour, who, after all, played a considerable part in determining the course of history?

What has been said as to the incompleteness of the phenomena of history, and the consequent impossibility of a final induction as to its law, leads to a remark on the theory that "Man is to be studied historically," and its necessary corollary that morality is not absolute but historical. If there can be no complete historical induction, and if, at the same time, Man is to be studied historically, not morally, and the rule of right action is to be taken, not from our moral instincts, but from the observation of historical facts, it is difficult to see how there can be any rule of right action at all. Morality and our moral judgment of characters and actions must, it would seem, always remain in suspense, till the world ends, and history is complete. History of itself, if observed as science observes the facts of the physical world, can scarcely give man any principle or any object of allegiance, unless it be success. Success accordingly enters very largely into the morality of the thorough-going Positivist. He canonizes conquerors and despots, and consigns to infamy the memory of men, who, though they fell, fell struggling for a noble cause, and have left a great and regenerating example to mankind. The morality, not only absolute but mystical, which Positivism in its second phase has adopted to satisfy moral instincts, is a mere copy of the social aspect of

Christianity ; as the Church, the sacraments, and the priesthood, invented to satisfy our religious instincts, are a mere copy of the Church of Rome.

You may say that virtue has prevailed in history over vice, and that our allegiance is due to it as the stronger. But granting that it has prevailed hitherto, to say which is the stronger you must see the end of the struggle. The theologian who, like Hobbes, makes religion consist not in our moral sympathy with the divine nature, but in necessary submission to divine power, will find himself in the same dilemma. He claims our allegiance for the power of good, not on the ground of our sympathy with good, but because it is stronger than the power of evil. He, too, before he says which is the stronger, must see the end of the struggle. If evil prevails, his allegiance must be transferred.

It is true that morality in judging the past must take notice of historical circumstances, as morality takes notice of present circumstances in judging the actions of living men. Allowance must be made for the age, the country, the state of things in which each character moved. In this sense (and it is a most important sense), there may be said to be such a thing as historical, in contradistinction to an absolute, morality ; though a morality which disregarded the circumstances of actions in history or life would deserve to be called not absolute, but idiotic, and, in fact, has never been propounded. But let the merit or demerit of an historical action vary ever so much with the circumstances, justice has been justice, mercy has been mercy, honour has been honour, good faith has been good faith, truthfulness has been truthfulness, from the beginning ; and each of these qualities

is one and the same in the tent of the Arab and in the senates of civilized nations. A sound historical morality will sanction strong measures in evil times; selfish ambition, treachery, murder, perjury, it will never sanction in the worst of times, for these are the things that make times evil.

Again, institutions not good in themselves may be good for certain times and countries; they may be better than what went before, they may pave the way for something better to follow. Despotism is an improvement on anarchy, and may lead to ordered freedom. But there must be limits to our catholicity in the case of institutions as well as in the case of actions. Our sympathy here, too, is bounded by morality. It is just possible it may embrace the institution of slavery, if slavery was really a middle term between wars of extermination and a free industrial system; though it is almost impossible to imagine how slavery could ever be otherwise than injurious to the character of the slave-owner, whatever it might be to that of the slave. But cannibalism, which certain theories would lead us philosophically to accept as useful and amiable in its place, must have been execrable everywhere and in all times.

So, again, it is most true that there is a general connexion between the different parts of a nation's civilization; call it, if you will, a *consensus*, provided that the notion of a set of physical organs does not slip in with that term. And it is most true that the civilization of each nation must, to a certain extent, run its own course. It is folly to force on the most backward nations the laws and government of the most forward, or to offer intellectual institutions to tribes which have not attained the arts of life. But

that which is good for all may be given to all, and among the things which are good for all are pure morality and true religion. We cannot at once give a British constitution to the Hindoo; but we may at once, in spite of *consensus* and necessary development, teach him the virtue of truth and the unity of God. The thing may be impossible in the eye of the positive science of history; it is done with difficulty, but it is done.

We have admitted that the philosophy of history is indebted to physical science for habits of methodical reasoning with a view to practical results. From physical science dealing, however wrongly, with history, we also gain a certain calmness and breadth of view, derived from regions in which there is no partizanship or fanaticism, because there are no interests by which partizanship or fanaticism can be inflamed. It is less easy to acknowledge that the student of history is indebted to the physical school of historical philosophy for enlarging our historical sympathies. That school, on the contrary, extinguishes all sympathy in any obvious sense of the word. We can feel love and gratitude for free effort made in the cause of man; but how can we feel love or gratitude towards the human organ of a necessary progress, any more than towards a happy geological formation or a fertilizing river? On the other hand, it would be easy to give specimens of the sort of sympathy and the sort of language which results from taking a purely scientific view of history and man. "Truth does not regard consequences," was a noble saying; but there are some cases in which the consequences are a test of truth. As the physical view of character and action, if it really took possession of the mind,

must put an end to self-exertion, so the physical view of the history of nations would dissolve the human family by making each nation regard the other as in a course of necessary progress, to be studied scientifically, but not to be hastened or interfered with, instead of their doing all they can to enlighten and improve each other.

We must not suppose that because the order of national actions is often necessary, the actions themselves are. A nation may have to go through one stage of knowledge or civilization before it can reach another, but its going through either is still free. Nations must accumulate a certain degree of wealth before they can have leisure to think or write; but the more degraded and indolent races refuse to accumulate wealth.

We must guard, too, against physical metaphors in talking of history; they bring with them physical ideas, and prejudice our view of the question. Men do not act in *masses*, but in multitudes, each man of which has a will of his own, and determines his action by that will, though on the same motives as the rest. Development is a word proper to physical organs, which cannot be transferred to the course of a nation without begging the whole question. The same thing may be said of social statics and dynamics applied to the order and progress of a nation.

Of course in hesitating to accept the physical view of man, and the exact science founded on that view, we do not deny or overlook the fact, that besides the character and actions of particular men, there is a common human nature, on the general tendencies of which, considered in the abstract, the Moral and Economical Sciences are founded. In themselves, and

till they descend into the actions of particular men or nations, these sciences are exact, and give full play to all those methods of scientific reasoning, of which, once more, physical science seems to be the great school. But let them descend into the actions of particular men and nations, and their exactness ceases. The most exact of them, naturally, is Political Economy, which deals with the more animal part of human nature, where the tendencies are surer because the conflict of motives is less. Yet even in Political Economy no single proposition can be enunciated, however true in the general, which is not constantly falsified by individual actions. It seems doubtful whether the tendencies are surer in the case of nations than in the case of men. The course of a nation is often as eccentric, as wayward, as full of heroic and fiendish impulse, as impossible to predict from year to year, from hour to hour, as that of a man. The passions of men are not always countervailed and nullified by those of other men in a nation, they are often intensified by contagion to the highest degree, and national panic or enthusiasm goes far beyond that of single men. The course of nations, too, is liable to the peculiar disturbing influence of great men, who are partly made by, but who also partly make, their age. A grain more of sand, said Pascal,—say rather a grain less of resolution,—in the brain of Cromwell, one more pang of doubt in the tossed and wavering soul of Luther, and the current of England or the world's history had been changed. The Positivists themselves, though it is their aim to exhibit all history as the result of general laws, are so far from excluding personal influences, that they have made a kind of hagiology and demonology of eminent

promoters of progress and eminent reactionists, as though these, rather than the laws, ruled the whole; and no higher, not to say more fabulous, estimate of the personal influence of Richelieu and Burke will be found than in the work of a Positivist author who has treated all personal history as unphilosophical gossip, henceforth to be superseded by histories written on a philosophical method. Accidents, too, mere accidents,—the bullet which struck Gustavus on the field of Lützen, the chance by which the Russian lancers missed Napoleon in the churchyard of Eylau, the chance which stopped Louis XVI. in his flight at Varennes and carried him back to the guillotine,—turn the course of history as well as of life, and baffle, to that extent, all law, all tendency, all prevision.

There are some other views, rather than theories, of history, besides the strictly Necessarian theory, which conflict with free-will, and which may be just noticed here.

One is the view, if it should not be rather called a play of fancy, which treats all nations as stereotyped embodiments of an idea, or the phases of an idea, which is assumed to have been involved in the original scheme of things. China, which is naturally first fixed on in applying this hypothesis to the facts of history, may by a stretch of imagination be taken to embody a stereotyped idea, though even in China there has been change, and indeed progress, enough to belie the notion. But as to all the more progressive nations, this view is so palpably contradicted by the most glaring facts, that we need hardly go further. We may dispense with asking how an idea, which never was present to any mind but that of a modern philosopher, became embodied in the actions which

make up the history of a nation ; how it passed in its different phases from nation to nation, and how it happens that its last phase exactly coincides with our time. The half-poetic character of this view is apparent, when we are told that the reason for beginning with China is, that the light of civilization, as well as the light of the sun, must rise in the East ; as though the sun rose in China ! Here, in fact, we see Metaphysical Philosophy, as well as Physical Science, attempting to extend its empire over a domain which is not its own.

Other writers erect some one physical influence, the influence of race, of climate, of food, into a sort of destiny of nations. The importance of these influences is great, and to trace them is a task full of interest and instruction. But man is the same in his moral and intellectual essence, that is, in his sovereign part, whatever his stock, whether he live beneath African suns or Arctic frosts, whether his food be flesh, corn, or a mixture of the two. He is not, as these theorists would make him, the most helpless, but the most helpful of animals ; and by his mind applied to building, warming, clothing, makes his own climate ; by his mind applied to husbandry and commerce, modifies his own food. Race seems, of all physical influences, the strongest. Yet how small and superficial is the difference, compared with the agreement, between a cultivated man and a good Christian from London and one from Paris, or even between one from either of those places and one from Benares. The prevailing passion for degrading humanity to mere clay, and levelling it with the other objects of physical science, is liable, like other prevailing passions, to lead to exaggeration. Con-

fidant deductions, of the most sweeping and momentous kind, are made for a statement of physical fact. The statements are overthrown^a. Yet the deductions are not withdrawn; and the world in its present mood seems not unwilling to believe that the destruction of the proof leaves the theory founded on it still generally true.

There is also a floating notion that the lives of nations are limited by some mysterious law, and that they are born, grow to maturity, and die like men. But the life of a nation is a metaphorical expression. No reason can be given why a nation should die; and no nation ever has died, though some have been killed by external force.

Parallels between the political courses of nations are also sometimes pressed too far, and made to seem like a necessary law. Some of the little states of Greece ran a remarkably parallel course, but they were not independent of each other; they were all members of the Greek nation, and influenced each other's politics by contagion, and sometimes by direct interference. A parallel, which seemed curiously exact, was also drawn between the events of the English and French Revolutions: it seemed to hold till the accession of Louis Philippe, but where is it now? The similarity between the two Revolutions was in truth superficial, compared with their dissimilarity. Religion, the main element of the English movement, was wanting in the French: the flight of the nobility, the confiscation of their estates, and the establishment of a new peasant proprietary, which decided the ultimate character and destiny of the

^a See the *Edinburgh Review*, vol. cvii., pp. 468, 9. (April, 1858.)

French movement, were wanting in the English. So far as there was a similarity, it was produced partly by mere general tendencies, which lead to anarchy after gross misgovernment, to a dictatorship after anarchy, and to the attempt to recover freedom after a dictatorship; partly by mere accidents, such as the want of a son and heir in the case both of Charles II. and of Louis XVIII., and the consequent reversion of the crown to a brother, who belonged by age and education to the old state of things. Had Monmouth been Charles's legitimate son, all probably would have been changed.

Lastly, there is the habit of tracing special acts of Providence in history. This sometimes goes the length of making history one vast act of special Providence, and turning it into a puppet-play, which, our hearts suggest, might have been played with other puppets less sensible of pain and misery than Man. Surely it is perilous work to be reading the most secret counsels of the Creator by a light always feeble, often clouded by prejudice, often by passion. The massacre of St. Bartholomew seemed a special act of Providence to the papal party of the day. Are *Te Deums* for bloody victories in reality less profane? Is the scoff of Frederic true, and is Providence always with the best-drilled grenadiers? To a believer in Christianity nothing seems so like a special act of Providence as the preparation made for the coming of Christianity through the preceding events in the history of Greece and Rome, on which a preacher was eloquently enlarging to us the other day. To a believer in Christianity it seems so. But those who do not believe in Christianity say, 'Yes: that is the true account of the matter. Christianity arose from a happy

confluence of the Greek and Roman with the Hebrew civilization. This is the source of that excellence which you call divine.' Thus what appears to one side a singular proof of the special interposition of Providence, is used on the other side, and necessarily with equal force, to shew that Christianity itself is no special interposition of Providence at all, but the natural result of the historical events by which it was ushered into the world. The Duke of Weimar spoke more safely when he said of the tyranny of the first Napoleon in Germany, "It is unjust, and therefore it cannot last." He would have spoken more safely still if he had said, 'Last or not last, it is unjust, and being unjust, it carries its own sentence in its heart, and will prove the weakest in the sum of things.'

Is history, then, a chaos because it has no necessary law? Is there no philosophy of history because there is no science?

There are two grand facts with which the philosophy of history deals,—the division of nations and the succession of ages. Are these without a meaning? If so, the two greatest facts in the world are alone meaningless.

It is clear that the division of nations has entered deeply into the counsels of creation. It is secured not only by barriers of sea, mountains, rivers, intervening deserts,—barriers which conquest, the steam-vessel, and the railroad might surmount,—but also by race, by language, by climate, and other physical influences, so potent that each in its turn has been magnified into the key of all history. The division is perhaps as great and as deeply rooted as it could be without destroying the unity of mankind. Nor is it hard to see a reason for it. If all mankind were one state, with

one set of customs, one literature, one code of laws, and this state became corrupted, what remedy, what redemption would there be? None, but a convulsion which would rend the frame of society to pieces, and deeply injure the moral life which society is designed to guard. Not only so, but the very idea of political improvement might be lost, and all the world might become more dead than China. Nations redeem each other. They preserve for each other principles, truths, hopes, aspirations, which, committed to the keeping of one nation only, might, as frailty and error are conditions of man's being, become extinct for ever. They not only raise each other again when fallen, they save each other from falling; they support each other's steps by sympathy and example; they moderate each other's excesses and extravagances, and keep them short of the fatal point by the mutual action of opinion, when the action of opinion is not shut out by despotic folly. They do for each other nationally very much what men of different characters do for each other morally in the intercourse of life: and that they might do this it was necessary that they should be as they are, and as the arrangements of the world secure their being, at once like and unlike, like enough for sympathy, unlike enough for mutual correction. Conquest, therefore, may learn that it has in the long run to contend not only against morality but against nature. Two great attempts have been made in the history of the world to crush the nationality of large groups of nations, forming the civilized portion of the globe. The first was made by the military Rome of antiquity; the second, of a qualified kind, was made by the ecclesiastical Rome of the middle ages, partly by priestly weapons, partly by the sword of devout kings.

The result was universal corruption, political and social in the first case, ecclesiastical in the second. In both cases aid was brought, and the fortunes of humanity were restored by a power from without, but for which, it would seem, the corruption would have been hopeless. In the first case, the warlike tribes of the North shivered the yoke of Rome, and after an agony of six centuries, restored the nations. In the second case, Greece rose from the dead with the New Testament in her hand, and breathed into the kindred spirits of the great Teutonic races such love of free enquiry and of liberty, that they rose and rent the bonds of Rome and her Celtic vassals,—rent them, but at the cost of a convulsion which filled the world with blood, and has made mutual hatred almost the law of Christendom from that hour to this. Without the help of Greece it does not appear that the gate of the tomb in which Europe lay would ever have been forced back. She might have been pent in it for ever, like the doomed spirits in Dante when the lid of their sepulchres is closed at the last day. Wickliffe and John Huss spent their force against it in vain. The tyranny might have been differently shared between the different powers of the universal Church, between Pope and Council, between Pope and King: but this change would have done little for liberty and truth. Nationality is not a virtue, but it is an ordinance of nature and a natural bond; it does much good; in itself it prevents none; and the experience of history condemns every attempt to crush it, when it has once been really formed.

To pass to the other grand fact with which the philosophy of history deals—the succession of ages. It is clear that the history of the race, or at least of

the principal portion of it, exhibits a course of moral, intellectual, and material progress ; and that this progress is natural, being caused by the action of desires and faculties implanted in the nature of man. It is natural, but it is not like any progress caused by a necessary law. It is a progress of effort, having all the marks of effort as clearly as the life of a man struggling and stumbling towards wisdom and virtue ; and it is as being a progress of effort, not a necessary development, that its incidents, revealed in history, engage our interest and touch our hearts.

There seems to be nothing in the fact of progress either degrading to human dignity or pampering to human pride. The assertion, that history began in fetichism and cannibalism, is made without a shadow of proof. Those states are assumed at a venture to have been the first, because they are seen to be the lowest ; the possibility of their being not original states, but diseases, being left out of sight. As to fetichism, the first hunter or shepherd who swore to another and disappointed him not, though it were to his own hindrance, must have felt the supernatural sanction of duty, and the eternity of moral as contrasted with physical evil ; and, therefore, he must implicitly have believed in the two great articles of natural religion,—God and the immortality of the soul. It is *mythology*, of which fetichism is the lowest form, that has its root in nature. *Religion* has its root in man ; and man can never have been without religion, however perverted his idea of God, and however degraded his worship may have been. As to cannibalism, it seems to be sometimes a frenzy of the warlike passions, sometimes a morbid tendency engendered by the want, in certain islands, of animal

food. At all events, it is most unlikely that the original food of man should have been that which is not only the most loathsome but the most difficult to obtain, since he would have to overcome an animal as strong and as cunning as himself. Besides, how could the human race have multiplied if they had lived upon each other ?

On the other hand, as progress does not imply a state worse than the brutes at the beginning, so it does not imply perfection in the end ; though it is not for us to limit the degree of knowledge or excellence which it may have pleased the Creator to render attainable at last by man. This doctrine, in truth, checks our pride by putting each generation, ours among the number, in its true place. It teaches us that we are the heirs of the past, and that to that heritage we shall add a little, and but a little, before we bequeath it to the future ; that we are not the last or the greatest birth of time ; that all the ages have not wandered in search of truth, that we might find it pure and whole ; that we must plant in the hope that others will reap the fruit ; that we must hand on the torch,—brighter, if we do our part,—but that we must hand it on ; and that no spasmodic effort will bring us in our span of life and labour to the yet far-off goal.

But, welcome or unwelcome, the progress of humanity down to the present time is a fact. Man has advanced in the arts of life, in the wealth which springs from them, in the numbers which they support, and with the increase of which the aggregate powers and sympathies of the race increase. He has advanced in knowledge, and still advances, and that in the accelerating ratio of his augmented knowledge added to his powers. So much is clear ; but then it is

said, 'The progress is intellectual only, not moral; we have discoveries of the intellect increasing in number and value from age to age, whose authors are the proper and sole objects of the world's gratitude and love. We have no moral improvement; the moral nature of man remains the same from the beginning, with the same passions and affections, good and evil, which it is confidently added are always in equilibrium. The moral law is the same for all ages and nations; nothing has been added to the Decalogue.' This theory is carried as far as it well can be when it is laid down, not only that the progress of humanity is a progress of the intellect alone, but that the progressive virtue of the intellect lies in scepticism or doubt, the state of mind which suspends all action; and when it is further laid down that moral virtue, so far from causing the progress of humanity, sometimes impedes it, the proof of which is the mischief done in the world by good men who are bigots,—as though bigots were good men.

That morality and man's moral nature remain the same throughout history, is true; it is true also that morality and the moral nature remain the same throughout man's life, from his birth to his old age. But character does not remain the same; the character of the man is continually advancing through life; and in like manner, the character of the race advances through history. The moral and spiritual experience of the man grows from age to age, as well as his knowledge, and produces a deeper and maturer character as it grows. Part of this experience is recorded in religious books, the writings of philosophers, essays, poetry, works of sentiment, tales,—a class of literature which must seem useless and unmeaning to

those who hold that our progress is one of science alone. Part of it is silently transmitted, with its increase, through the training which each generation gives to the next. We ask why the ancients thought and wrote so little about the beauties of nature? It certainly was not that they lived in a land less beautiful, or saw its beauties with eyes less keen than ours. But the love of natural beauties is not only in the eye; it requires a certain maturity of sentiment to call out the mute sympathy with which nature is charged for man, to lend their mystery to the forest and the sea, its pensiveness to evening, its moral to the year. When a modern, instead of writing modern poetry, imitates, however skilfully, the poetry of the Greeks, how great is the sacrifice of all that most touches our hearts; and yet how much that is beyond the range of Greek sentiment remains! Philanthropy is a Greek word, but how wide a circle of ideas, sentiments, affections, unknown to the Greeks, does its present meaning embrace! In natural religion itself the progress seems not less clear. Man's idea of God must rise as he sees more of Him in His works, as he sees more of Him by reflecting on his own nature, (in which the true proof of natural religion lies,) and in those efforts of human virtue in other men which would be unaccountable if there were no God, and this world were all. More and more, too, from age to age, the ideas of the soul and of a future life rise in distinctness; Man feels more and more that he is a traveller between the cradle and the grave, and that the great fact of life is death; and the centre of human interest moves gradually towards the other world. Man would perhaps have been paralyzed in his early struggle with nature for subsistence, had these deep thoughts then

taken too much possession of his mind. His earliest and coarsest wants satisfied, he began to feel other wants, to think of himself and his own destinies, and to enter on a distinct spiritual life. Those at least began to do so who had leisure, power of mind, and cultivation enough to think, and the reach of whose intellects made them feel keenly the narrow limit of this life. Yet the spiritual life was confined to few, and even in those few it was not of a very earnest kind. The *Phædo* is a graceful work of philosophic art, rather than a very passionate effort to overcome the grave. The Greek, for the most part, rose lightly from the banquet of life to pass into that unknown land with whose mystery speculation had but dallied, and of which comedy had made a jest. The Roman lay down almost as lightly to rest after his course of public duty. But now if death could really regain his victory in the mind of man, hunger and philosophy together would hardly hold life in its course. The latest and most thoroughgoing school of materialism has found it necessary to provide something for man's spiritual nature, and has made a shadowy divinity out of the abstract being of humanity, and a shadowy immortality of the soul out of a figment that the dead are greater than the living. Lucretius felt no such need.

If it could be said that there was no progress in human character because the moral law and the moral nature of man remain the same in all ages, it might equally be said that there could be no variety in character because the moral law and our moral nature are the same in all persons. But the variety of characters which our hearts, bound to no one type, acknowledge as good, noble, beautiful, is infinite, and

grows with the growing variety of human life. It ranges from the most rapt speculation to the most vigorous action, from the gentlest sentiment to the most iron public duty, from the lowliest flower in the poetry of Wordsworth to that grand failure, Milton's picture of the fallen archangel, who lacks the great notes of evil, inasmuch as he is not mean or selfish, but is true to those who have fallen by him, for them braves a worse fate than the worst, and for them amidst despair wears hope upon his brow. The observance of the moral law is the basis and condition, as the common moral nature is the rudiment, of all excellence in human character. But it is the basis and condition only; it is negative, whereas character is positive, and wins our reverence and affection because it is so. The Decalogue gives us no account of heroism or the emotions it excites; still less does it give us an account of that infinite variety of excellences and graces which is the beauty of history and life, and which we cannot doubt the great and ever-increasing variety of situations in history and life were intended by the Creator to produce.

If the end and the key of history is the formation of character by effort, the end and key of history are the same with the end and key of the life of man. If the progress of the intellect is the essential part of history, then the harmony between man and history is at an end. Man does not rest in intellect as his end, not even in intellect of a far less dry and more comprehensive kind than that which the maintainers of the intellectual theory of history have in view. If all mankind were Hamlets it would scarcely be a happier world. Suppose intellect to be the end of Man, and all moral effort, all moral beauty, even all

poetry, all sentiment, must go for nothing; they are void, meaningless, and vain;—an account of the matter which hardly corresponds with the meaning and fitness (not to assume design) which we see in every part of the physical world. Certainly, if we believe in a Creator, it is difficult to imagine Him making such a world as this, with all its abysses of misery and crime, merely that some of His creatures might with infinite labour attain a modicum of knowledge which can be of use only in this world, and must come to nothing again when all is done. But if the formation of character by effort is the end, everything has a meaning, everything has a place. A certain degree of material well-being, for which man naturally exerts himself, is necessary to character, which is coarse and low where the life of man is beast-like, miserable and short. Intellect and the activity of intellect enter (we need not here ask how) deeply into character. For the beauty of intellectual excellence the world forgives great weakness, though not vice; and all attempts to cast out intellect and reduce character to emotion, even religious emotion, have produced only a type which is useless to society, and which the healthy moral taste has always rejected. And certainly, if character is the end of history, and moral effort the necessary means to that end, (as no other means of forming character is known to us,) optimism may, after all, not be so stupid as some philosophers suppose; and this world, which is plainly enough so arranged as to force man to the utmost possible amount of effort, may well be the best of all possible worlds.

We must pause before the question how deep the unity of humanity and the unity of history goes;

how far those who, through all the ages, have shared in the long effort, with all its failures, errors, sufferings, will share in the ultimate result; how far those who have sown will have their part in the harvest, those who have planted in the fruit; how far the future of our race as well as the past is ours. That is a secret that lies behind the veil.

LECTURE II.

IN a former lecture I gave reasons for hesitating to believe that history is governed by necessary laws. I submitted that history is made up of the actions of men, and that each of us is conscious in his own case that the actions of men are free. I am not aware that even an attempt has been made to reconcile the judgments of the retrospective conscience; the belief implied in those judgments that each action might have been done or left undone; and the exceptional allowance which conscience makes in the case of actions done wholly or partly on compulsion, with the hypothesis that our actions are subject to causation like the events of the physical world. Wherein is an Alfred more the subject of moral approbation than a good harvest, or a Philip II. more the subject of moral disapprobation than the plague? This is a question to which I am not aware that an answer has yet been given.

Still, if it could be shewn that history does, as a matter of fact, run in accordance with any invariable law, we might be obliged to admit that the Necessarians (so I shall venture to call them till they can find another application for the term 'necessity') had gained their cause; though a strange contradiction would then be established between our outward observation and our inward consciousness. I therefore examined the hypothesis of M. Comte, that

the development of humanity is regulated by the progress of science through the successive stages of Theological, Metaphysical, and Positive. I submitted that, among other antecedent objections to the theory, these three terms do not form a series, Positive, that is, sound Science and Theology not being successive, but co-existent, in the highest minds. Other writers of the same school can hardly be said to have propounded a general hypothesis. They have rather brought out, and I venture to think immensely exaggerated, the effects produced on the comparative history of nations by certain physical influences, especially by the influence of food. I think I perceive that there is a tendency among the disciples of these teachers to allow that their hypotheses are incapable of verification; but at the same time to insist that they are grand generalizations, and that, being so grand, it is impossible they should not point to some great truth. For my part, I see no more grandeur in a scientific hypothesis which is incapable of verification than in the equally broad assertions of astrology. I see no impossibility, but an extreme likelihood, that physical science having lately achieved much, should arrogate more than she has achieved, and that a mock science should thus have been set up where the domain of real science ends. I think this supposition is in accordance with the tendencies of human nature and with the history of human thought. It is all the more likely that this usurpation on the part of Science should have taken place, since Theology has tempted Science to usurp by long keeping her out of her rightful domain. We see here, too, the reaction which follows on all injustice.

I submitted, moreover, that it is difficult to see how

history can supply its own inductive law, since its course is always advancing, the list of its phenomena is never full, and, till the end of time, the materials for the induction can never be complete. How often would a partial observation lead physical science to lay down false laws!

But why argue without end about that which we may bring to a practical test? If the master-science has been discovered, let it shew forth its power and we will believe. Let those who have studied the science of Man and History predict a single event by means of their science; let them even write a single page of history on its method; let them bring up one child by the rules for directing and modifying moral development which it gives. There is another and a higher test. Has the true key to human character been found? Then let a nobler type of character be produced. Apply the science of humanity, and produce a better man.

Till the law of history is not only laid down but shewn to agree with the facts, or till humanity has been successfully treated by scientific methods, I confess I shall continue to suspect that the new science of Man is merely a set of terms, such as 'development,' 'social statics,' 'social dynamics,' 'organization,' and, above all, 'law,' scientifically applied to a subject to which in truth they are only metaphorically applicable: I shall continue to believe that human actions, in history as in individual life and in society, may and do present moral connections of the most intimate and momentous kind, but not that necessary sequence of causation on which alone science can be based; I shall continue to believe that humanity advances by free effort, but that it is not de-

veloped according to invariable laws, such as, when discovered, would give birth to a new science.

I confess that I am not wholly unbiassed in adhering to this belief. I am ready to face the conclusions of true science. Let true science make what discoveries it will, for example, as to the origin of life; terrible and mysterious as they may be, they will not be so terrible or mysterious as death; they can but shew us that we spring from something a little higher than dust, when we know already that to dust we must return. But however we may dally with these things in our hours of intellectual ease, there is no man who would not recoil from rendering up his free personality and all it enfolds, to become a mere link in a chain of causation, a mere grain in a mass of being, even though the chain were not more of iron than of gold, even though the mass were all beautiful and good, instead of being full of evil, loathsomeness, and horror. The enthusiasts of science themselves shrink from stating plainly what, upon their theory, Man is, and how his essence differs from that of a brute or of a tree. Is he responsible? Wherein, it must once more be asked, does his responsibility consist? Why praise or blame him? Why reward or punish him? Why glow with admiration at the good deeds of history or burn with indignation at the evil? Is the moral world a reality, or is it a mere phantasmagoria, a puppet-show of fate?

Some of these writers cling to the ideas and love to use the names of Spirit and of God. If spirit exists, what is the spirit of man? Did it spring together with the other part of him by physical development from a monad, or from a lower animal type? We have deeply rooted in our nature a conviction of the inde-

feasible, undying nature of moral good and evil; the real proof that our moral part lives beyond the grave. Is this conviction a freak of our moral nature? This God who is to reign over His own world on condition that He does not govern it, what is He? The supreme law of nature? Then let us call Him by His right name. Supposing Him distinct from the law of nature, is He above it or beneath it? If He is above it, why is He bound to observe it in His dealings with the spirit of man? Why may there not be a whole sphere of existence, embracing the relations and the communion between God and man, with which natural science has no concern, and in which her dictation is as impertinent as the dictation of theology in physics? Why may not spiritual experience and an approach to the divine in character be necessary means of insight into the things of the spiritual world, as scientific instruments and scientific skill are necessary means of insight into the things of the material world?

If you give us an hypothesis of the world, let it cover the facts. The religious theory of the world covers all the facts; the physical view of the world covers the physical facts alone.

And after all, what is this adamant barrier of law built up with so much exultation between man and the source from which hitherto all the goodness and beauty of human life has sprung? In the first place, what right has inductive science to the term *law*? Inductive science can discover at most only general facts; that the facts are more than general, that they are universal, in a word, that they are laws, is an assumption for which inductive science, while she instinctively builds on it, can herself supply

no basis. I need not tell my hearers how she has attempted it by the hand of a great logician, or how utterly the attempt has failed. Let her weave mazes of thought, observe upon observation, induce upon induction as she will, she will find the ground of universals and the basis of science to be instinctive reliance in the wisdom and unity of the Creator. And thus science, instead of excluding the supernatural, does constant homage to it for her own existence.

In the second place, what is the sum of physical science? Compared with the comprehensible universe and with conceivable time, not to speak of infinity and eternity, it is the observation of a mere point, the experience of an instant. Are we warranted in founding anything upon such data, except that which we are obliged to found on them, the daily rules and processes necessary for the natural life of man? We call the discoveries of science sublime; and truly. But the sublimity belongs not to that which they reveal, but to that which they suggest. And that which they suggest is, that through this material glory and beauty, of which we see a little and imagine more, there speaks to us a Being whose nature is akin to ours, and who has made our hearts capable of such converse. Astronomy has its practical uses, without which man's intellect would scarcely rouse itself to those speculations; but its greatest result is a revelation of immensity pervaded by one informing mind; and this revelation is made by astronomy only in the same sense in which the telescope reveals the stars to the eye of the astronomer. Science finds no law for the thoughts which, with her aid, are ministered to man by the starry skies. Science can explain the hues of sunset, but she cannot tell from what urns of

pain and pleasure its pensiveness is poured. These things are felt by all men, felt the more in proportion as the mind is higher. They are a part of human nature ; and why should they not be as sound a basis for philosophy as any other part? But if they are, the solid wall of material law melts away, and through the whole order of the material world pours the influence, the personal influence, of a spirit corresponding to our own.

Again, is it true that the fixed or the unvarying is the last revelation of science? These risings in the scale of created beings, this gradual evolution of planetary systems from their centre, do they bespeak mere creative force? Do they not rather bespeak something which, for want of an adequate word, we must call creative effort, corresponding to the effort by which man raises himself and his estate? And where effort can be discovered, does not spirit reign again?

A creature whose sphere of vision is a speck, whose experience is a second, sees the pencil of Raphael moving over the canvas of the Transfiguration. It sees the pencil moving over its own speck, during its own second of existence, in ~~one~~ particular direction ; and it concludes that the formula expressing that direction is the secret of the whole.

There is truth as well as vigour in the lines of Pope on the discoveries of Newton :—

“ Superior beings, when of late they saw
 A mortal man unfold all Nature’s law,
 Admired such wisdom in an earthly shape,
 And shewed a Newton as we shew an ape.”

If they could not shew a Newton as we shew an ape, or a Newton’s discoveries as we shew the feats of apish cunning, it was because Newton was not a mere in-

tellectual power, but a moral being, labouring in the service of his kind, and because his discoveries were the reward not of sagacity only, but of virtue. We can imagine a mere organ of vision so constructed by Omnipotence as to see at a glance infinitely more than could be discovered by all the Newtons ; but the animal which possessed that organ would not be higher than the moral being.

Reason, no doubt, is our appointed guide to truth. The limits set to it by each dogmatist, at the point where it comes into conflict with his dogma, are human limits ; its providential limits we can learn only by dutifully exerting it to the utmost. Yet reason must be impartial in the acceptance of data, and in the demand of proof. Facts are not the less facts because they are not facts of sense ; materialism is not necessarily enlightenment ; it is possible to be at once chimerical and gross.

We may venture, without any ingratitude to science as the source of material benefits and the training-school of inductive reason, to doubt whether the great secret of the moral world is likely to be discovered in her laboratory, or to be revealed to those minds which have been imbued only with her thoughts, and trained in her processes alone. Some, indeed, among the men of science who have given us sweeping theories of the world, seem to be not only one-sided in their view of the facts, leaving out of sight the phenomena of our moral nature, but to want one of the two faculties necessary for sound investigation. They are acute observers, but bad reasoners. And science must not expect to be exempt from the rules of reasoning. We cannot give credit for evidence which does not exist, because if it existed it would be of a scientific kind ;

nor can we pass at a bound from slight and precarious premises to a tremendous conclusion, because the conclusion would annihilate the spiritual nature and annul the Divine origin of man.

That the actions of men are, like the events of the physical world, governed by invariable law, and that consequently there is an exact science of man and history, is a theory of which, even in the attenuated form it is now beginning to assume, we have still to seek the proof. But a science of history is one thing ; a philosophy of history is another. A science of history can rest on nothing short of causation ; a philosophy of history rests upon connexion ; such connexion as we know, and in every process and word of life assume, that there is between the action and its motive, between motives and circumstances, between the conduct of men and the effect produced upon their character, between historic antecedents and their results. So far is the philosophy of history from being a new discovery, that the most meagre chronicle of the middle ages, the painted records of Egyptian kings, as they shew some connexion between events, present the germ of a philosophy ; of the philosophy which, in its highest form, traces the most general connexions, and traces them through the whole history of man.

The philosophy of history, in its highest sense, as was before said, is the offspring of a great truth which has but recently dawned upon mankind. That truth is the moral unity of the human race ; the softening down of mere dogmatic and ecclesiastical divisions between different parts of Christendom, the intercourse, the moral relation, the treaties and bonds ratified by common appeals to God, into which Chris-

tendom has entered with nations beyond its pale, have let in the conviction that virtue and truth, however they may vary in their measure, are in their essence the same everywhere, and everywhere divine. It may be that the growth of this conviction is a more potent cause of the change which we see passing over the face of the world than even the final decay, now visibly going on, of feudal institutions, and of the social system with which they are connected. Its consequences, to those who have imagined that the vital faith of man rests on ecclesiastical divisions, are not unattended with perplexity and dismay. But if the Churches of Hildebrand, Luther, and Calvin are passing away, above them rises that Church of pure religion and virtue to which in their controversies with each other they have all implicitly appealed, and which therefore is above them all. A certain man was hung by his enemies blindfold over what he supposed to be a precipice, with a rope in his hands; he clung till his sinews cracked, and he had tasted the bitterness of death; then, letting go the rope, he found that he had been hanging but half-a-foot from the ground.

Moral discoveries are generally followed by exaggeration. The unity of the human race has been exaggerated into identity; and a strange vision has arisen of an aggregate humanity, of which each man is a manifestation and an organ, and into which we at death return; the difference between death and life being, that the one is an objective the other a subjective existence. This wild realism is broached, singularly enough, by a school of thinkers who pour contempt on metaphysical articles. It is, in fact, part of a desperate attempt to satisfy the religious instincts of man and

his sense of immortality, when an irrational philosophy, discarding all sources of truth but the observation of the outward sense, has cut off the belief in the invisible world and God. Among the evidences of religion the fact that the blankest scientific atheism has been compelled to invent for itself a kind of divinity and a kind of spiritual world, and to borrow the worship of the Roman Catholic Church, will not hold the lowest place.

No one can doubt, if he would, that through the life of each of us there is carried a distinct line of moral identity, along which the retrospective conscience runs. No one can persuade himself that this line breaks off at death, so that when a man dies it ceases to signify what his particular life has been. No one can divest himself of the sense of individual responsibility, or imagine himself, by any effort of fancy, becoming a part of the mass of humanity and ceasing to be himself.

It is not the less certain that we are in a real and deep sense "members one of another;" and that moral philosophy may gain new truth and additional power by taking the philosophy of history into its counsels, and contemplating not only individual humanity but the whole estate of man.

The progress of the human race is a truth of which everyday language is full; one which needs no logical proof and no rhetorical enforcement. That the products of human action, thought, contrivance, labour, do not all perish with their authors, but accumulate from generation to generation, is in itself enough to make each generation an advance upon that which went before it. The movement of history is complex. We asked in a former lecture what was its leading part, and found reason to think that it was the gradual

elevation of the human character, to which all the other parts of the movement, intellectual and material, conduce. The rival claims of intellect to be the leading object in the history of humanity, though strongly put forward, will scarcely bear examination. Intellect may be used for good and it may be used for evil; it may be the blessing of humanity or the scourge; it may advance the progress of mankind, as it did when wielded by Luther, or retard it, as it did when wielded by Bonaparte. Whether it shall be used for good or evil, whether it shall be the blessing of humanity or the scourge, whether it shall advance progress or retard it, depends on the moral character of the possessor, which determines its employment. And this being the case, intellect must be subordinate to moral character in history.

Character, indeed, seems to be the only thing within the range of our comprehension for the sake of which we can conceive God having been moved to create man. We needlessly put a stumbling-block in our own way by importing into the divine nature the stoic notion of self-sufficing happiness. The highest nature which we can conceive is not one which disdains, but one which needs affection: and worthy affection can only spring from or be excited by a character of a certain kind. The supposition that man was created to love his Creator and to be the object of his Creator's love accords with our conceptions both of God and man. It does not accord with our conception of God to suppose that He created man with such capacity for suffering as well as for happiness, and placed him in such a world as this, merely to make an exhibition of His own power or to glorify Himself. To make an exhibition of power belongs to the restlessness of mortal strength, not to

the completeness and calmness of Omnipotence. To seek glory belongs to weak human ambition: and equivocal indeed would be the glory of creation if the history of man were to be its measure. One historian after another sets himself to write the panegyric of his favourite period, and each panegyric is an apology or a falsehood.

Our hearts acquiesce, too, in the dispensation which, instead of creating character in its perfection, leaves it to be perfected by effort. We can conceive no character in a created being worthy of affection which is not produced by a moral struggle; and on the other hand, the greater the moral difficulties that have been overcome, the more worthy of affection does the character seem. Try to conceive a being created morally perfect without effort; you will produce a picture of insipidity which no heart can love.

And effort is the law, if law it is to be called, of History. History is a series of struggles to elevate the character of humanity in all its aspects, religious, intellectual, social, political, rising sometimes to an agony of aspiration and exertion, and frequently followed by lassitude and relapse, as great moral efforts are in the case of individual men. Those who espouse the theory of necessary development as the key to history are driven to strange consequences. They are compelled to represent the torpid sensualism of the Roman Empire as an advance upon the vigorous though narrow virtue of the Republic. I see not how they escape from allowing, what with their historical sympathies they would not be disposed to allow, that in the history of our own country the Restoration is an advance upon the Puritan Republic. The facts of history correspond better with our moral sense if we

take the view that the awakening of moral life in the race, as in the man, often manifests itself in endeavours which are overstrained, chimerical, misdirected, higher than the general nature can sustain, and that upon these endeavours a reaction is apt to ensue. During the reaction some of the intellectual fruits of the crisis may be gathered in, but the moral nature languishes; though the elevation of the moral type gained by the previous effort does not perish, but is gained for ever, and, so far as it is true, enters for ever as an exalting influence into the thoughts and lives of men.

But here another problem presents itself, which may be beyond our power fully to solve, but as to which we cannot forbear to ask, and may possibly obtain, some satisfaction. In the material and intellectual world we are content to see order and design. The law of gravitation, the laws of the association of ideas, so far as they go, perfectly satisfy our minds. But in history it is otherwise. Here we are not satisfied with the discovery of a law, whether of development or of effort; we desire, we cannot help desiring, to see not only order and design, but justice.

We look over history. We see the man almost pitilessly sacrificed to the race. Scarcely any great step in human progress is made without multitudes of victims. Each pulling down of worn-out institutions brings perplexity and suffering on that generation, however pregnant with good it may be to the next. Every great change of opinion is accompanied, to one generation, by the distress of doubt. Every revolution in trade or industry, however beneficent in its results, involves sufferings to the masses which the world is long in learning how to avert. In the rude

commencements of government and law what evils do men endure from tyranny and anarchy ! How many of the weaker members of the race perish of want and cold before feeble invention can bridge the gulf between savage and civilized life !

It is difficult to doubt that in the early ages of the world races are brought forward to take the lead in history by the cruel test of pre-eminence in war and success in conquering the neighbouring races. To primitive tribes, and even to nations long civilized but not yet penetrated with the sense of our common humanity, conquest seems no crime, but either a natural appetite or an heroic enterprise ; and in the earliest ages the circumstances of savage hordes are such that they are inevitably driven on each other, or on the neighbouring nations, in quest of fresh hunting-fields, new pastures, or richer and sunnier lands. The human race reaps from this process a moral as well as a physical benefit. There is a connexion, not clearly traced, yet certain, between the stronger qualities in human character, such as courage, and the tenderer qualities, such as mercy, while conversely there is a certain connexion between cowardice and cruelty ; and the moral as well as the physical basis of humanity requires to be laid in fortitude and strength.

In philosophy and science, again, the race, like the man, advances by the trial of successive hypotheses, which are adopted and rejected in turn till the true one is at length found. In these successive trials and rejections, with the mental efforts and sacrifices they involve, humanity gains, what no sudden illumination could give it, large spiritual experience and a deep sense of the value of truth. But error is the portion of those generations by whom the false hypotheses are

tried. Nor is this process confined to the domain of mere intellectual truth; theories of life and modes of self-culture are in like manner tried and found impracticable or incomplete, at the expense of thousands, among whom are often numbered the flower of mankind. What effusion of blood, what rending of affections, what misery has been undergone to try out the question between different theories of society and government, each of which was plausible in itself! What an expenditure of high and aspiring spirits was necessary to prove that the monastic and contemplative life, in spite of its strong natural attractions, was not practicable for man!

Cast your eyes over the world, and see how the masses of men, how the majority of nations, labour not only in mental but in moral degradation to support a high and fine type of humanity in the few. Examine any beautiful work of art, and consider how coarse and dark is the life of those who have dug its materials, or the materials for the tools which wrought it, out of the quarry or the mine. Things absolutely essential to intellectual progress are furnished by classes which for ages to come the great results of intellect cannot reach, and the lamp which lights the studies of a Bacon or Leibnitz is fed by the wild, rude fisherman of the Northern Sea.

It is true that wherever service is rendered, we may trace some reciprocal advantage, either immediate or not long deferred. The most abstract discoveries of science gradually assume a practical form, and descend in the shape of material conveniences and comforts to the masses whose labour supported the discoverer in intellectual leisure. Nor are the less fortunate ages of history and the lower states of society without their

consolations. The intervals between great moral and intellectual efforts have functions of their own. Imperial Rome, amidst her moral lassitude, makes great roads, promotes material civilization, codifies the law. The last century had no soul for poetry, but it took up with melody, and produced the Handels and Mozarts. Lower pains go with lower pleasures, and the savage life is not without its physical immunities and enjoyments. The life of intense hope that is lived in the morning of great revolutions, may partly make up for the danger, the distress, and the disappointment of their later hour. But these, if they are touches of kindness and providence in Nature, welcome as proof that she is not a blind or cruel power, fall far short of the full measure of justice.

There are nations which have lived and perished half civilized, and in a low moral state, as we may be sure was the case with Egypt, and have played but a humble part, though they have played a part, in the history of the world. There are races which have become extinct, or have been reduced to a mere remnant, and whose only work it has been to act as pioneers for more gifted races, or even to serve as the whetstone for their valour and enterprise in the conflict of primitive tribes. There are other races, such as the negro races of Africa, which have remained to the present time, without progress or apparent capability of progress, waiting to be taken up into the general movement by their brethren who are more advanced, when, in the course of Providence, the age of military enterprise is past, and that of religious and philanthropic enterprise is come. They wait, perhaps, not in vain ; but, in the interim, do not myriads live and die in a state little above that of brutes ?

The question then is, Can we find any hypothesis in accordance with the facts of history which will reconcile the general course of history to our sense of justice? I say, to our sense of justice. I assume here that man has really been created in the image of God; that the morality of man points true, however remotely, to the morality of God; that human justice is identical with divine justice, and is therefore a real key to the history of the world. "If," says Clarke, "justice and goodness be not the same in God as in our ideas, then we mean nothing when we say that God is necessarily just and good; and for the same reason it may as well be said that we know not what we mean, when we affirm that He is an intelligent and wise Being; and there will be no foundation at all left on which we can fix anything. Thus the *moral attributes* of God, however they be acknowledged in words, yet in reality they are by these men entirely taken away; and, upon the same grounds, the *natural attributes* may also be denied. And so, upon the whole, this opinion likewise, if we argue upon it consistently, must finally recur to absolute atheism." Either to absolute atheism or to the belief in a God who is mere power, and to religion which is mere submission to power, without moral sympathy or allegiance.

I will not turn aside here to combat the opposite theory. I will merely observe by the way that these things have their history. If the doctrines of any established Church are not absolute and final truth, its corporate interests are apt ultimately to come into collision with the moral instincts of man pressing onwards, in obedience to his conscience, towards the further knowledge of religious truth. Then arises a terrible conflict. To save their threatened dominion,

the defenders of ecclesiastical interests use, while they can, the civil sword, and wage with that weapon contests which fill the world with worse than blood. They massacre, they burn, they torture, they drag human nature into depths of deliberate cruelty which, without their teaching, it could never have known; they train men, and not only men but women, to look on with pious joy while frames broken with the rack are borne from the dungeon of the Inquisition to its pile. Uniting intrigue with force, they creep to the ear of kings, of courtiers, of royal concubines; they consent, as the price of protection, to bless and sanctify despotism in its foulest form; they excite bloody wars of opinion against nations struggling to be free. Still, the day goes against them; humanity asserts its power; executioners fail; sovereigns discover that it little avails the king to rule the people if the Magian is to rule the king; public opinion sways the world, and the hour of Philip II., of Père la Chaise, of Madame De Maintenon, is gone never to return. Then follows a hopeless struggle for the last relics of religious protection, for exclusive political privileges, and for tests; a struggle in which religion is made to appear in the eyes of the people the constant enemy of improvement and of justice,—religion, from whom all true improvement and all true justice spring. This struggle, too, approaches its inevitable close. Then recourse is had, in the last resort, to intellectual intrigue, and the power of sophistry is invoked to place man in the dilemma between submission to an authority which has lost his allegiance and the utter abandonment of his belief in God—a desperate policy; for, placed between falsehood and the abyss, humanity has always had grace to choose

the abyss, conscious as it is that to fly from falsehood, through whatever clouds and darkness, is to fly to the God of truth. In weighing the arguments put before us on these questions, let us not leave out of sight influences whose fatal power history has recorded in her bloodiest page.

Assuming, then, that human justice is the same quality as divine justice, the idea of moral waste in the divine government, as displayed in history, is one in which we shall never force our hearts to acquiesce. If moral beings are wasted by the Creator, what is saved? Butler, indeed, suggests the analogy of physical nature, and intimates that we may resign ourselves to the waste of souls as we do to the waste of seeds. But in the case of the seed nothing is wasted but the form; the matter remains indestructible; while misery and despair there is none. The analogy of animals, on which Butler elsewhere touches in a different connexion, seems more formidable. Here are beings sentient, to a certain extent intelligent, and capable of pleasure and pain like ourselves, among whom good and evil seem to be distributed by a blind fate, regardless of any merits or demerits of theirs. The only answer that can at present be given to the question thus raised seems to be this: that we are not more certain of our own existence than we are that no fate or law regardless of morality rules us; and that as to animals, their destiny is simply beyond our knowledge. Was man to be placed in the world alone? Was he to be left without the sentiments and the moral influences which spring from his relations with his mute companions and help-mates? Or could he, the heir of pain in this world, be placed amidst a painless creation, without destroy-

ing the sympathy of things? It may be observed, too, that in the state of a large portion of the animal creation there seems to be a progressive improvement, not taking the form of physical development, but depending on and bearing a faint analogy to the improvement of the human race. As the human race spreads over the world and cultivates it, the carnivorous and ferocious animals disappear, and those more peaceful and happier tribes remain which are domesticated by man. If man himself should become, as some seem to expect, less carnivorous as he grows more civilized, his relations with animals will of course become still more kindly, and their lot still better. This remark does not go far; it applies only to a portion of the animal creation. But so far as it goes, it tends to prove that animals are not under blind physical law, but under providential care; and it suggests a sort of development, if that word is to be used, very different from the organic development which a certain school of science is seeking everywhere to establish. Rational enquiries into the nature, character, and lot of animals seem to be but just beginning to be made; and in their course they may clear up part of that which is now dark. Meantime, mere defect of knowledge is no stumbling-block. There is a faith against reason which consists in believing, or hypocritically pretending to believe, vital facts upon bad evidence, when our conscience bids us rest satisfied only with the best; but there is also a rational faith which consists in trusting, where our knowledge fails, to the goodness and wisdom, which, so far as our knowledge extends, are found worthy of our trust.

Butler, while he built his whole system on analogy, declined to enquire strictly what the logical force of

analogy was. The real ground of his great argument seems to be this—that the dealings of the same Being (in this instance the Creator) may be expected always to be the same ; which is true, with this momentous qualification, that the thing dealt with must be the same also. There is not only no assurance, there is not even the faintest presumption that, as God deals with seeds, so He will deal with lives ; or that, as He deals with mortal lives, so He will deal with immortal souls. The only analogy really applicable to these matters seems to be that of the moral nature of man, on which its Maker has impressed His own image, and which, when at its best, and therefore likest Him, shrinks from the thought of moral waste, and if it is compelled to inflict suffering by way of punishment, does so not to destroy but to save. The passage of Origen, of which Butler's analogy is an expansion, is taken from the literature of an age not too deep-thinking or too deep-feeling to endure the idea of an arbitrary God. To us that idea is utterly unendurable. If we could believe God to be arbitrary, above the throne of God in our hearts would be the throne of justice. If we translate Origen's words into philosophic language, do not they, and does not the argument which Butler has based on them, come to this,—that God is bound to deal with the spiritual as He deals with the material world ? And if this is true, is He not a fate rather than a God ?

We cannot help divining, then, that the true hypothesis of history will be one which will correspond to our sense of justice. But where can such an hypothesis be found ? Is there any colour of reason for adopting a view of history which would suppose a deeper community of the human race as to its object

and its destiny, than common language implies, and which would stake less than is commonly assumed to be staked on the individual life?

To such a view seem to point all the instincts which lead man to sacrifice his individual life to his fellows, his country, and, when his vision becomes more enlarged, to his kind. These instincts are regardless of the state of moral perfection at which he whom they propel to destruction has personally arrived. They do not calculate whether the soldier who rushes first into the breach, the man who plunges into a river to save one who is drowning, the physician who loses his own life in exploring an infectious disease, is, to use the common phrase, fit to die. They seem distinctly to aim at a moral object beyond the individual moral life, and affecting the character of the race. Yet at the same time they give strong assurance to him whose life they take that it is good for him to die.

That desire of living after death in the grateful memory of our kind, or, as we fondly call it, of immortality, to which the enjoyment of so many lives is sacrificed, is it a mere trick of nature to lure man to labour against his own interest for her general objects? Or does it denote a real connexion of the generation to which the hero, the writer, the founder belongs with the generations that will succeed?

Again, what is it that persuades the lowest and most suffering classes of society, when the superiority of physical force is on their side, to rest quiet beneath their lot, and forbear from breaking in with the strong hand upon civilization, which in its tardy progress will scarcely bring better times to their children's children, and has too plainly no better times in store for them? Is it not an instinct which bids them respect the des-

tinies of the race? And why should they be bidden to respect the destinies of the race, if those destinies are not theirs?

Why this close interlacing of one moral being with the rest in society, if after all each is to stand or fall entirely alone? Why this succession of ages, and this long intricate drama of history, if all that is to be done could have been done as well by a single set of actors in a single scene?

If each man stood entirely alone in his moral life, unsupported and unredeemed by his kind, nature, the minister of eternal justice, would surely be less lavish of individual life, and of all that is bound up in it, than she is. At least, she would shew some disposition to discriminate. Those myriads on whom, through the accidents of war, changes and failures of trade, earthquakes, plagues, and famines, the tower of Siloam falls, as we know they are not sinners above all the Galileans, so we can scarcely think that they, above all the Galileans, are prepared to die.

Society is the necessary medium of moral development to man. Yet even society, to serve its various needs, sacrifices to a great extent the moral development of individual men. It is vain to say that those who are put, through life, to the coarsest uses, the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the social system, can rise to the highest and most refined moral ideal; though we know that in merit towards society they are, and are sure that in the eye of God they must be, equal to those who do. Delicacy of sentiment, which is essential to our notion of the moral ideal, can scarcely exist without fineness of intellect, or fineness of intellect without high mental cultivation. And if we were to say that the want of that

which high mental culture confers is no loss, we should stultify all our own efforts to promote and elevate education. Even the most liberal callings carry with them an inherent bias scarcely compatible with the equable and flawless perfection which constitutes the ideal. Busy action and solitary thought are both necessary for the common service; yet inevitable moral evils and imperfections beset alike those who act in the crowd and those who think alone. Each profession has its point of honour, requisite for social purposes, but overstrained with regard to general morality, and naturally apt to be accompanied by some relaxation of the man's general moral tone. We forgive much to a soldier for valour in the field, much to a judge for strict integrity on the bench of justice; and we can hardly expect that the conscience of the soldier or the judge will not admit into its decisions something of the same indulgence. Did not the strictest of Universities choose as her Chancellor a man of the world, a man of pleasure, and a duellist, because as a soldier and a citizen he had done his duty supremely well?

Does it follow that the moral law is to be relaxed on any point, or that any man is to propose to himself a lower standard of morality in any respect? No; it only follows that in forming our general views of man and his destiny we must limit our expectations of individual perfection, and seek for compensation in the advancement of the kind. We must in the main look for the peculiar virtues of the religious pastor elsewhere than in the camp or at the bar; though when the virtues of the religious blend with those of the busy and stirring life, we feel that the highest aspiration of nature is fulfilled. It

may be that advancing civilization will soften down inequalities in the moral condition of men, and diminish the impediments to self-improvement which they present; but we can scarcely expect that it will efface them, any more than it will efface the moral differences attendant upon difference of sex.

In the passionate desire to reach individual perfection, and in the conviction that the claims of society were opposed to that desire, men have fled from society and embraced the monastic life. The contemplative and ascetic type of character alone seemed clear of all those peculiar flaws and deformities to which each of the worldly types is liable. The experiment has been tried on a large scale, and under various conditions; by the Buddhist ascetics; in a higher form by the Christian monks of the Eastern Church; and in a higher still by those of the West. In each case the result has been decisive. The monks of the West long kept avenging nature at bay by uniting action of various kinds with asceticism and contemplation, but among them, too, corruption at last set in, and proved that this hypothesis of life and character was not the true one, and that humanity must relinquish the uniform and perfect type which formed the dream of a Benedict or a Francis, and descend again to variety and imperfection.

Variety and imperfection are things, the first of which seems necessarily to involve the second. Yet the taste which prefers variety to sameness, even in the moral world, is so deeply rooted in our nature, that if taste means anything, this taste would seem to have its source and its justification in the reality of things.

Separate, too, entirely the destinies of man from those of his fellow, and you will encounter some per-

plexing questions, not to be avoided, touching the strong cases of natural depravity which occur among the most unfortunate of our kind. Actual idiocy may be regarded as destroying humanity altogether. But are there not natural depravities, moral and intellectual, short of idiocy, which preclude the attainment of any high standard of character, and forbid us to make the moral destiny of these beings too dependent on the individual life?

Our common notions, which make the moral life so strictly individual, seem to depend a good deal on the belief that each man is, morally, not only a law but an independent and perfect law to himself. But is this so? Is the voice of individual conscience independent and infallible? Do we not, in doubtful cases, rectify it by consulting a friend, who represents to us the general conscience of mankind? Of what is it that conscience speaks? Is it of abstract right and wrong? Are not these conscience itself under another name? Moralists, therefore, support conscience, and give it meaning by identifying it with universal expediency, with the fitness of things, with the supreme will of the Creator. Universal expediency and the fitness of things are ultimate and distant references, if they are not altogether beyond the range of our vision. The will of God as an object distinct from morality seems altogether to defy our power of conception. Would conscience retain its authority if it were not more immediately supported by human sympathy, love, and reverence, through which the Maker of us all speaks to each of us, and which are bestowed in virtue of our conformity to a type of moral character preserved by the opinion and affection of the race? The sympathy, love, and

reverence of our kind are, at all events, objects of a real desire and incitements to virtuous action, which the philosophic definitions of morality, however high-sounding, can scarcely be said to be.

Common language divides virtues and vices into the social and the self-regarding. But are there any purely self-regarding virtues or vices? Does not temperance fit us and intemperance unfit us to perform the duties of life towards our kind? Is it easy to preach temperance and denounce intemperance very powerfully except by reference to the claims and opinion of society? Would a man be very clearly bound to give up an enjoyment which injures himself alone? It is sometimes said of a good-natured spendthrift and voluptuary that he was only his own enemy. We have not to look far to see that he must have been the enemy of all about him, and of society. But if the statement were true it would almost disarm the censure of mankind.

The question whether virtue be enlightened and deep self-love, which has been rather glossed than solved, may perhaps be partly solved by experiment. You preach against incontinence, for instance, on grounds of personal purity, and your preaching proves not very effective. Try a different course. Preach against incontinence on the ground of pity for its victims, and see whether that motive will be more availing.

That there is a complete and independent moral code innate in each of us, is an opinion which it is difficult to hold when we see how much the special precepts of the moral law have been altered by social opinion for the best members of society in the course of history. Piracy, wars of conquest, duelling, for

example, were once approved by the moral code; they are now condemned by the improved code which has sprung from the enlarged moral views and more enlightened conscience of mankind. I say that the special precepts of the moral code are altered; I do not say that the essence of morality changes. The essence of morality does not change. Its immutability is the bond between the hearts of Homer's time and ours. The past is not without its image in the present. Suppose a young London thief, such as Defoe has painted, kind-hearted, true to his comrades in danger and distress, making a free and generous use of his plunder, and in his depredations having mercy on the poor. It is plain that the boy would be much better if he did not steal, as he will himself see, directly he is taught what is right. It is plain, on the other hand, that he is not a bad boy, that (to apply the most practical test) you can neither hate nor despise him; that on the whole he does more good than evil in the world. The evil he does even to property is slight, compared with that which is done by rich idlers and voluptuaries, since while he steals a little they taint it all. Not that the moral law does not include property as an essential precept, but that the essence of morality lies deeper than the special precepts of the moral law.

Where the essence of morality lies, history must wait to be taught by ethical science. Till she is taught, it is impossible that she can form her philosophy on a sound basis; and, therefore, those who are devoted to historical studies may be excused for impatiently desiring a more rational enquiry into this, the central secret of the world. It is not by verbal definitions, however philosophic in appearance, that

we shall ascertain what morality really is. We must proceed by a humbler method. Does morality lie in action, or in character? Do not actions, similar in themselves and equally voluntary, change their moral hue as they spring from one character or another? Are not crimes committed from habit, at once the least voluntary and the most culpable? and is not the paramount importance of character, of which habitual action is the test, the account of this paradox? Is not the same action, if done by a character tending upwards, regarded as comparatively good? if by a character tending downwards, as comparatively evil? Is it not, in short, as indications of character, and on that account only, that actions excite our moral emotions, as distinct from our mere sense of social interest? And if this be so, is it not rather in character than in action that morality lies? If it is, we must analyze the phenomena of character by some rational method. There are two sets of qualities, one of which excites our reverence, the other our love; and which tend to fusion in the more perfect characters, but as a character never reaches perfection, are never completely fused. What is the common ingredient of these two sets of qualities? What is the common element in the hero and the saint? What connects grandeur of character with grace? What, in short, are our several moral tastes, and what and how related are the different points of character that attract and repel them? In the case of doubtful characters, such as that of a Wallenstein, or that of an Othello, what is it that constitutes the doubt? what is it that turns the scale? Which of the vices are more, which less, destructive of beauty of character? and what is it that determines the difference of their effects? If deliberate

eruelty, for instance, is the worst, the most unpardonable of vices, may it not point to the prime source of moral excellence in the opposite pole? These are questions which seem at least to present rational starting points for enquiry, and to be capable of being handled by a rational method; and they must be rationally handled before we can construct a real philosophy of history—perhaps it may be added, before moral philosophy itself can become fruitful, and pass from airy definition to the giving of real precepts for the treatment of our moral infirmities and the attainment of moral health. The school which regards history as the evolution of a physical organization under a physical law, is ready with a multiplicity of hypotheses, furnished by the analogy of physical science. The school which regards history as the manifestation and improvement of human character through free action is in suspense for want of some sounder and more comprehensive account of human character than has yet been supplied.

On the other hand, history, as we have said, may lend light to the moral philosopher. He cannot fail to be assisted and guided by contemplating not individual humanity only, but the whole estate of man. Some things become palpable on the large scale, which, in examining the single instance, do not come into view, or may be overlooked. History forces on our notice, and compels us to take reasonably into account, the weakness, the necessary imperfections, the various and unequal lot, the constraining circumstances, the short, precarious life of man. In history, too, beside the tragic element of human life, there plainly appears another element, which may not be without its significance. Whenever an historian gives us a touch of

genuine humour, we recognise in it a touch of truth. Humour, the appreciation of what is comic in man and his actions, is a part of our moral nature ; it is founded on a kind of moral justice ; it discriminates crime from weakness ; it tempers the horror which the offences of a Louis XIV. excite, with a smile, which denotes the allowance due to a man taught by his false position and by his sycophants to play the god. In its application to the whole lot of man, and to the lot of each man, it may perhaps be thought to suggest that the drama is not pure tragedy, and that all is not quite so terrible or so serious as it seems.

There is no doubt that all this points, not by any means to a lower morality, but to a somewhat lower estimate of the moral powers of individual man ; to an attainable ideal, and to the deliberate love of human characters in spite of great imperfections, if on the whole they have tended upwards, and done, in their measure, their duty to their kind. And is not man more likely to struggle for that which is within than for that which is beyond his reach ? If you would have us mount the steep ascent, is it not better to shew us the first step of the stairs than that which is nearest to the skies ? If all the rhetoric of the pulpit were to be taken as literally true, would not society be plunged in recklessness, or dissolved in agonies of despair ? A human morality saves much which an impracticable morality would throw away ; it readily accepts the tribute of moral poverty, the fragment of a life, the plain prosaic duty of minds incapable from their nature or circumstances of conceiving a high poetic ideal. On the other hand, it has its stricter side. It knows nothing of the merits of mere innocence. It requires active service to be

rendered to society. It holds out no salvation by wearing of amulets or telling of beads. Regarding man as essentially a social being, it bears hard on indolent wealth, however regular and pious ; on sinecurism in every sense ; on all who are content to live by the sweat of another man's brow. It teaches that to be underpaid is better than to be overpaid ; and that covetousness and grasping, though they may not violate the law, are a robbery, at once immoral and fatuous, of the common store.

There is little fear, let us say once more, lest any man, not a victim to the mad mysticism into which materialism is apt to be hurried by the Nemesis of reason, should imagine himself divested of his distinct personality, or of his distinct personal responsibility, and merged in the aggregate of humanity, or in the universe of which humanity is a part. It is difficult to express such reveries in the language of sane men. But that the human race is, in a real sense, one ; that its efforts are common, and tend in some measure to a joint result ; that its several members may stand in the eye of their Maker, not only as individual agents, but as contributors to this joint result,—is a doctrine which our reason, perhaps, finds something to support, and which our hearts readily accept. It unites us not only in sympathy but in real interest with the generations that are to come after us, as well as with those that have gone before us ; it makes each generation, each man, a partaker in the wealth of all ; it encourages us to sow a harvest which we shall reap, not with our own hands, indeed, but by the hands of those that come after us ; it at once represses selfish ambition and stimulates the desire of earning the gratitude of our kind ; it strengthens all social, and

regulates all personal desires ; it limits, and by limiting sustains effort, and calms the passionate craving to grasp political perfection or final truth ; it fills up the fragment, gives fruitfulness to effort apparently wasted, and covers present failure with ultimate success ; it turns the deaths of states, as of men, into incidents in one vast life ; and quenches the melancholy which flows from the ruins of the past,—that past into which we too are sinking, just when great things seem about to come.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE doctrine of Clarke as to the identity of human and divine justice, to which I have subscribed in this lecture, and without which it seems to me that history and the whole moral world would be reduced to chaos, is controverted, in the supposed interest of revealed religion, by the learned and distinguished author of the Bampton Lectures for 1858, who (p. 206, 3rd ed.) comes to the conclusion that "human morality, even in its highest elevation, is not identical with, nor adequate to measure, the Absolute Morality of God." If this be so, I venture to submit, with Clarke, that the "morality of God" is an utterly unmeaning phrase, or that, if it means anything, it means the *immorality* of God; human morality and human immorality being the only two ideas which our minds can possibly form upon the subject, or which our language can possibly express.

If there are two Moralities, a Divine and a Human, which may indefinitely conflict with each other, (and as we "are unable to fix in any human conception" what the divine morality is, we cannot fix any definite limit to their conflict,) there is, in effect, no morality at all.

Elsewhere (Lect. viii., p. 244,) the Lecturer, in spite of his decision that the moralities of God and man are not identical, shews a desire to reconcile divine with human morality in regard to certain actions attri-

buted to God, of which the morality is disputed. This he does by introducing a doctrine of moral miracles, which isolates the actions in question from the divine nature and character, and thus saves the divine morality in human eyes. It would have been more consistent to say that the actions, being instances of divine, not of human morality, were not to be reconciled with our moral perceptions. A miracle in the ordinary sense is a breach of the natural law: a moral miracle, by analogy, must be a breach of the moral law. Why should not a criminal at the bar, instead of making a bad defence, say that he has performed a moral miracle?

“That there is an Absolute Morality, based upon, or rather identical with, the Eternal Nature of God,” says the Lecturer, in a passage immediately preceding that which I first quoted, “is indeed a conviction forced upon us by the same evidence as that on which we believe that God exists at all. But *what* that Absolute Morality is we are as unable to fix in any human conception as we are to define the other attributes of the same Divine Nature.” To believe in the existence of that which we “are unable to fix in any human conception,” and to believe in its relation to and identity with another thing (which, according to the Lecturer, is equally beyond our conception), will, I believe, be found, on the most conscientious experiment, a feat impossible to the human mind. The “conviction” may be “forced” upon the Lecturer, if he wishes to avoid the tremendous consequences of his theory, but he cannot, without giving us new understandings, “force” it upon us.

By thus denying the identity of Human and Divine morality, we cut away, as Clarke truly observes, all

arguments for the immortality of the soul which are founded on divine justice. If we know nothing of the absolute justice of God, what presumption is there that it will lead Him to redress the sufferings of the good in a future state of existence ?

It fares with truth as with morality. "The highest principles of thought and action, to which we can attain, are *regulative*, not *speculative* ; they do not serve to satisfy the reason, but to guide the conduct ; they do not tell us what things are in themselves, but how we must conduct ourselves in relation to them."—(p. 141.) "It is thus strictly in analogy with the method of God's Providence in the constitution of man's mental faculties, if we believe that in religion also He has given us truths which are designed to be regulative rather than speculative ; intended not to satisfy our reason, but to guide our practice ; not to tell us what God is in His absolute nature, but how He wills that we should think of Him in our present finite state."—(p. 143.) If there is no truth attainable by man but "regulative truth," there is no truth attainable by man at all. "Regulative truth" is a nonentity. A *rule* may be such as it is necessary to obey, but it cannot, in the proper sense, be *true*. Is not the substitution of the uncommon and incorrect phrase "regulative truth" for the common word "rule," prompted by an instinctive reluctance to exhibit the terrible image of an Almighty Master in place of a moral God ?

It may be true that "action and not knowledge is man's destiny and duty in this life."—(p. 149.) But that to which the Lecturer reduces the state of man is action *without* knowledge ; the state of mere physical agents.

That "there is a higher and unchangeable principle embodied in these forms" (p. 209) is a welcome doctrine; but to say that we "have abundant reason to believe it" is to assume that we not only can attain, but transcend, the limits of the highest "speculative" truth. It is to assume that we can pronounce not only on the existence but on the "embodiment" in certain forms of that which "we are unable to fix in any human conception."

Morality and truth are gone, and God hardly remains. If God is "inconceivable" (p. 171) I fail to apprehend how we can believe in Him: my mind, though conjured in the name of "duty," is unable to present to itself the existence of anything of which I have no conception. Still more obvious does it seem to me that I cannot, with the nature that is given me, revere and love a Being who reveals Himself to me, not as He is, but under "regulative representations." —(p. 150.) The Lecturer, indeed, (p. 145,) lays it down as matter of "faith" that "the conceptions which we are compelled to adopt as the guides of our thoughts and actions now, may indeed, in the sight of a higher Intelligence, be but partial truth, but cannot be total falsehood." God's own representation of Himself to man cannot be *totally false*! Why not *totally* false as well as *partly* false? Who has assured the Lecturer that the "conceptions" which we are "compelled to adopt" bear to the reality any relation expressible by the human terms 'truth' and 'falsehood'? But supposing it to be ascertained that they are only in part false; how are we to know which part is the truth, which the falsehood? To what are our hearts to turn as the real object of our religious affection? From what are they to turn away (they cannot

choose but turn away) as the "falsehood" and the mask?

Is the Church of England prepared to say of Christ that He was to the Apostles a 'regulative representation,' 'not *totally* false,' of the Divine Nature?

In asserting that conceptions which God compels man to adopt cannot be total falsehood, the Lecturer, it seems to me, is doing that which he warns us against presuming to do: he is constructing "a Philosophy of the Absolute." He is, in like manner, constructing a philosophy of the Absolute when he undertakes to say (p. 242) that "it is one thing to condemn a religion on account of the habitual observance of licentious or inhuman rites of worship, and another to pronounce judgment on isolated facts, historically recorded as having been done by divine command, but not perpetuated in precepts for the imitation of posterity." How, but by transcending what he lays down as the limits of human thought, can he be assured that the difference between the Divine and the Diabolical nature is this, that whereas the Diabolical nature is habitually criminal, the Divine nature commits only isolated crimes?

If he says that it is the "regulative" ill effect of habitually inhuman and licentious religions that proves them not to be divine, where but in a Philosophy of the Absolute does he find the sanction of that particular criterion? From what other source can he have learnt that "facts" "done by divine command," though not expressly "perpetuated in precepts," are not intended "for the imitation of posterity?" He tells us (p. 211) that "there are limits within which alone" the rule of the suspension of human duties by God "can be *safely* applied." Is

“safely” to be taken as having reference to our personal convenience, or to what he is taught by the philosophy of the Absolute respecting the nature of things?

In another place (p. 240) the Lecturer says, “We are indeed bound to believe that a revelation given by God can never contain anything that is really unwise or unrighteous.” Here, again, he seems to be constructing a philosophy of the Absolute. “Real wisdom” and “real righteousness” must be used in a sense intelligible to us, or we could not possibly be “bound” to have any belief about them; but without a philosophy of the Absolute how can we tell that everything in a revelation given by God must be really wise and righteous in a sense intelligible to us? The “duty” implied in the word “bound” can have its sanction only in that philosophy which the Lecturer has declared to be impossible.

There is one passage of the lectures in which, if I do not misapprehend its import, a belief in God is actually proved to be impossible to the human mind. “Sensation without thought would at most amount to no more than an indefinite sense of uneasiness or momentary irritation, without any power of discerning in what manner we are affected, or of distinguishing our successive affections from each other. To distinguish, for example, in the visible world, any one object from any other, to know the house as a house, or the tree as a tree, we must be able to refer them to distinct notions; and such reference is an act of thought. The same condition holds good of the religious consciousness also. In whatever mental affection we become conscious of our relation to a Supreme Being, we can discern that

consciousness, as such, only by reflecting upon it as conceived under its proper notion. Without this, we could not know our religious consciousness to be what it is; and, as the knowledge of a fact of consciousness is identical with its existence, without this, the religious consciousness, as such, could not exist.”—(p. 107.) Is there any “proper notion” analogous to the “notion” of a “house” under which our relation to a Supreme Being can be conceived? And if there is none, does it not follow from the Lecturer’s reasoning that this “fact of religious consciousness” cannot be known, and therefore that it cannot exist? Is not the argument in effect this—‘We can have no distinct knowledge of anything, unless we can refer it to a class of objects, and thus distinguish it in our minds from objects of a different class; and that of which we have no distinct knowledge has to our minds no existence. Now there is no class of objects to which we can properly refer God; therefore we can have no distinct knowledge of God; therefore to our minds God has no existence.’ In his apologetic Preface (p. xix.) the Lecturer says, “A negative idea by no means implies a negation of all mental activity. It implies an attempt to think, and a failure in accomplishing the attempt.” But I presume it also implies a failure to love, revere, and commune with that which is a mere negative idea. And, what the Lecturer does not seem to observe, it implies a failure to recognise or receive any sort of revelation. Revelation is the voice of God. How can we know the voice, if the Speaker is unknown?

Again, when we are told (p. 144) in regard to our capability of knowing God, that “we behold effects only, and not causes,” the natural import of this ex-

pression surely is, that we are cognizant of creation only, not of a Creator. I do not wonder that materialists should have received these lectures with approbation, as well as bishops. It is to blank materialism and empiricism that such reasonings inevitably lead.

Morality, truth, God, are swept away. Nothing is left but the bare, hard text of Scripture, as a brazen regulator thrust into the world by an almighty Power, to compel us to move in a certain way, without reference to the moral reason which God has given us, however rash some divines may think it in Him to have done so. And this "regulative truth" has been inserted into the world piece by piece, at long intervals of time. A portion of truth is truth; but a fragment of a rule is no rule at all.

Is such a revelation as this a revelation indeed, or an obscuration of God?

Scripture is not to commend itself by the divine character of its contents, for this would be making men able to discern and appreciate what is divine. "The legitimate object of a rational criticism of revealed religion is not to be found in the *contents* of that religion, but in its *evidences*."—(p. 234.) And the only evidences left to us, it would seem, are the miracles, considered as exhibitions of power. To consider them as exhibitions of divine love, and put them forward as evidences in that respect, would be to construct a philosophy of the Absolute; for it would be to assume that love, human love, is divine, and its exhibition a note of divinity. All the internal evidences fall under the same fatal objection; being all moral, they all involve the assumption that human morality is identical with the morality of God. The miracles,

as evidences of power, alone remain; and the Scripture itself says that miracles of power may be diabolical as well as divine.

If the words of Scripture are "regulative representations" of the divine nature, and if the moral notions signified by them are not our moral notions, they will become rather sacred amulets than words. Their sanctity and efficacy will depend on their exact identity. Can we be certain that they will bear translation into another human language? What becomes of the Gospel of St. Matthew, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, which have probably not been transmitted to us in the original tongue? Can we venture to interpret the "regulative representation" of the inconceivable? or must we simply keep it with reverence as an *ancile* which has fallen from the skies? Deductions from Scripture seem to be quite out of the question. At one point (p. 2) the Lecturer is seized with a just misgiving that his scythe has swept away the Athanasian Creed. He therefore throws in a saving clause for "the mere enunciation of religious truths, as resting upon authority, and not upon reasoning." But what is this "authority," and how is it established? Is it in possession of a philosophy of the Absolute, that it should be able to say which among the "regulative representations" of Scripture are a proper subject for the human process of deduction? Further on (p. 5) the Lecturer stigmatizes as dogmatists those "who seek to build up a complete scheme of theological doctrine out of the unsystematic materials furnished by Scripture, partly by the more complete development of certain leading ideas; partly by extending the apparent import of the Revelation to ground which it does not avowedly occupy, and attempting by inference and

analogy to solve problems which the sacred volume may indeed suggest, but which it does not directly answer; partly by endeavouring to give additional support to the scriptural statements themselves, treating them as truths, not above, but within the grasp of reason, and capable of demonstration from rational premises." Repudiate "the development of leading ideas," "the extension of the apparent import of revelation," "the solution by inference or analogy of problems suggested but not answered by the sacred volume," and what justification is left for the framers of the Athanasian Creed, not to say of the Nicene? I should have thought that the passage was directly intended to cut away every possible ground from under their feet. When we take up "weapons" in defence of a good cause, we must take care that they have not a double edge.

You go to a heathen whom you wish to convert, and say, 'You must not judge of my religion by its contents, for they are beyond your judgment, but by its evidences, which are the miracles.' May not he answer, 'My religion is said to be attested by miracles as well as yours, and the questions of historical criticism, on the one side and on the other, are such as I have neither time, learning, nor capacity to solve. Besides, according to your own Scriptures, Egyptian sorcerers and false prophets can perform miracles, so that I do not see how miracles by themselves can establish the truth of a religion.' Or rather, supposing him to have any notion of religion, would he not say, 'If your religion is to be judged, not by its contents, but by its evidences, it must be the lowest and vilest religion in the world.'

Spinoza, in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (c. 15),

after setting forth the discrepancy between Scripture and reason, proceeds to consider their relative claims. The "Sceptics," he says, bend Scripture to reason; the "Dogmatists" bend reason to Scripture. He rejects both these courses, and concludes, "*quod nec theologia rationi, nec ratio theologiæ ancillari teneatur, sed unaquæque suum regnum obtineat; nempe uti diximus, ratio regnum veritatis et sapientiæ, theologia autem pietatis et obedientiæ.*" He has before (c. 13) demonstrated to his own satisfaction, "*Scripturam non nisi simplicissima docere, nec aliud præter obedientiam intendere; nec de divina natura aliud docere, quam quod homines certa vivendi ratione imitari possunt.*" The Mephistophelic language of the Arch-pantheist seems in a fair way to become the orthodox theory of revelation.

Any attempt to determine the relative spiritual value of the different parts of the regulative truth contained in the Scriptures, becomes as vain and rash as interpretation and deduction. Not only "if you reject one jot or one tittle of the whole doctrine of Christ" must you pronounce the whole an imposture, (p. 249,) but if you doubt the literal accuracy or the perfect authenticity of one jot or one tittle of any part of the Bible, the authority of the whole is gone. "We may not divide God's Revelation." A trifling discrepancy, a passage of questionable genuineness, may deprive Man of Revelation and of God.

But the most formidable difficulty still remains. If the exact canon of Scripture is everything, what is the exact canon of Scripture, and who is its appointed guardian? Philosophy, we are told, "speaks with stammering lips and a double tongue." The voice of the Churches is not perfectly clear or one. The

Church of Rome includes the Apocrypha in the necessary sum of "regulative truth." The Church of England pronounces for their exclusion. There are no miracles to decide the question; and the Lecturer is a man of too much sense to suppose that it can be decided for each man by the accident of his birth. As to the Anglican Canon, the Article, we know, states that there never was any doubt in the Church about the authority of any of the books contained in it. But the histories which contradict the Article as to the matter of fact require elaborate confutation. If we can know God, and know His voice, these difficulties are as nothing; if we cannot know God, they are death.

Finally, Scripture itself is directly at issue with the philosophy, or negation of philosophy, on which, according to the Lecturer, its exclusive authority is founded. It sets out with the declaration, the solemn and repeated declaration, that man was created in the image of his Maker; whereas the negative philosophy proves that the morality of man is not identical with the absolute morality of God, and consequently that the moral nature of God cannot be imaged in that of man. The Author of Christianity bids us pray God to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; a direct appeal to an analogy between the human and divine nature. On the other hand, the Bampton Lecturer says (p. 214) that "it is obvious, on a moment's reflection, that the duty of man to forgive the trespasses of his neighbour rests precisely upon those features of human nature which cannot by any analogy be regarded as representing an image of God." I have read what the Lecturer has said in his answer to Mr. Maurice, but there is

no escaping the contradiction. The clause in the Lord's Prayer is not an appeal to human sinfulness, but to Divine sympathy, and to a similarity, in the act of free forgiveness, between the human nature and the Divine. The Lecturer's inflexible logic has led him into a dilemma not unlike those into which the great Jesuit doctors were led (most innocently as I believe) through their unwary reasonings from premises originally commended rather by their adaptation to the weakness of human nature than by their abstract truth.

Let it be at once said, however, that throughout these Lectures, with the dark growth of the negative philosophy, there twines, in happy contradiction, a more wholesome plant, attesting the real geniality of the soil beneath. In the more rhetorical passages (as at p. 190) the Christian preacher gives the cold doctrines of the negative philosopher to the winds, and admits implicitly that there are firm, independent grounds for natural religion. Again, (at p. 248,) he places among the evidences of Christianity the character of its Founder; whose portrait he there, embracing the better philosophy, acknowledges that we can pronounce to be Divine.

It is therefore the less necessary to follow him into the metaphysical labyrinth which he has constructed for himself and his hearers. By turning a notion really negative, such as "infinity," into a positive notion, and bringing it into antagonism with its supposed opposite, you may make mental puzzles enough for a long summer's day. The soundest as well as the simplest way of approaching the question is to begin by enquiring, not whether there can be a Philosophy of the Absolute or of the Infinite, but whether the pure in heart see God.

I will add two remarks, which, perhaps, occur to me especially as a student of history.

The first remark is this. The blow which in these Lectures kills natural religion is dealt through the side of German philosophy. I am quite prepared to believe that German philosophy is scholasticism, not science; that it reasons from arbitrary notions; and that it has borne, and will bear, no fruit. It is, perhaps, neither the only nor the last philosophy of which this might be plausibly affirmed. If it founds religion on pure metaphysics and logic, it falls into an absurdity equalled only by that of attempting to prove the impossibility of religion on purely metaphysical or logical grounds. But history owes it thanks for a great and noble effort to give Europe a moral faith at a time when all faith had been swept away by the corruption of the clergy and the destructive criticism of Voltaire. Fichte may have run into extravagances; but think that he devoted his intellect to the support of a high, disinterested morality in the age of Talleyrand and Bishop Pretyman, and you will be inclined, if you can be touched by the weakness of humanity, to strew flowers upon his grave.

The second remark is this. Before you decide, on metaphysical grounds, to what degree of religious knowledge man can attain, it may be useful to enquire, historically, what degree he has actually attained. It may be well to consider the natural religion of Plato, and still more that of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, before you pronounce that no natural religion is possible, beyond a blind craving for support and expiation. History is a mere string of facts without moral philosophy; and, without history, moral philosophy is apt to become a dream.

Nor, while I adhere to the doctrine opposed to that of the Lecturer, in regard to his main position, will I conclude these brief observations on his theory without paying the humble tribute of my sincere admiration to the power of statement displayed in some parts of his book. I may allude especially to a passage in his first lecture, where, in vindicating the representation of God given in the Bible, he demolishes the figment, much in vogue among exclusively scientific minds, of an insensible, inflexible, immovable, in a word, of a scientific, as opposed to a moral, God. It is one thing to use controversial weapons borrowed from negative philosophy ; it is another thing to be yourself a negative philosopher.

